



Church Reform Without the Church: Reginald Pole's Experience in Italy (1521-1553)

Davide Romano

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

Florence, 10 December 2015

European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

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Examining Board

Professor Antonella Romano, European University Institute
Professor Jorge Flores, European University Institute
Professor Simon Ditchfield, University of York
Professor Massimo Firpo, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Reginald Pole's 1532 return to Italy, where he had spent five years between 1521 and 1526 to complete his studies, marked the beginning of his rapid rise in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Not only did the Plantagenet cousin of Henry VIII come close to being elected pope, but he also became the focus of the widespread expectations of Church reform. For his part, however, Pole did never outline a concrete programme for reform, not even in his *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, on which he worked from the eve of the Council of Trent until the last years of his life. The numerous versions of this unpublished treatise have been the starting point of my study, which examines the apparent contradiction between Pole's silence on the practical measures to restore Peter's ship to its pristine state and the high hopes he aroused as a reformer, to the extent that he was often hailed as the long-awaited Angelic Pope.

The analysis of *De reformatione* shows a peculiar conception of reform, grounded in Pole's "radical eclecticism" (both at philosophical and at doctrinal level) as well as in his belief in the coexistence of the exoteric ecclesiastical institution and the esoteric spiritual Church. The development of this unconventional ecclesiology was significantly inspired by a usually neglected source, that is to say the Joachimist tradition within which the prophetic myth of the Angelic Pope developed before reaching Pole, at the time of his first sojourn in Italy. These convictions led him, along with the circle of the *spirituali* of Viterbo, to put into practice a reform outside of the Council of Trent, by means of the same non-institutional channels through which they attempted to spread the religious message that lay at the heart of their undeclared programme.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have always been reluctant to set down in a thesis what I would rather communicate privately to the people concerned, but since this might be the last act of my academic trajectory, it is worth making the effort. I can not but start with Antonella Romano, who is neither my aunt nor in any way related to my family, as we used to say on the occasion of seminars and workshops. Her expert guidance, skilfully combining strictness and gentleness, has greatly facilitated the regular progress of my research project. I must say, however, that it has not taken a long time for her proverbial strictness to give way to friendliness and understanding; she has always been ready to lend a sympathetic ear. After some turbulence during the first year at the European University Institute, my new second reader Jorge Flores has given me more than he probably thinks, in terms of confidence and serenity. I am grateful to Simon Ditchfield too for agreeing to be a member of my examining board, and I feel honoured that I will receive his comments on my thesis. The same can be said of Massimo Firpo, whom I also thank for awaiting patiently the rare “epiphanies” of his prodigal son, as well as for granting him unlimited access to his library. It was he who suggested applying to the EUI, where I found indeed an ideal environment for preparing my dissertation. The tenacity with which Ruth Nirere-Gbikpi has attempted to provide me digital copies of manuscripts has saved me many trips to Rome, while Serge Noiret, for his part, has hardly ever rejected my suggestions for book purchase. Professors and members of the administrative staff in the History department have always been approachable and helpful; with some of them (along with other people that are too numerous to mention) I have also had the pleasure to share many musical moments or other extracurricular activities.

I am deeply grateful to my parents, Angela and Salvatore, for their constant tactful support, both spiritual and material. I know it has not been easy to restrain themselves from expressing their apprehension at my impending deadlines, especially when there was less and less news of me and no other option but to pray. At least deadlines will hopefully cease haunting them, even though this source of worry will be replaced soon by something else, as in the natural order of things. I would like to thank my sister Federica for holding me in such a high esteem, as I occasionally realise when I am congratulated by people who hear her

speaking so well of me. I can not fail to mention my stepdaughter Chiara, who is looking forward to the moment when I will not have to be sitting all day at my computer. Her apparently inexhaustible vitality has lightened the atmosphere during the periods of intensive work, thus acting as a reminder of the other dimensions of life with which research needs to be complemented. This brings me to Valentina, who has always stayed at my side with unwavering constancy and admirable devotion. Her trips to Florence have been innumerable, and so are the reasons for being grateful to her. If you will pardon my talking in trivial wooden riddles (she knows what I mean), I may say that the doctorate I am hopefully going to receive, other things being equal, corresponds to the “doctor8” she has completed in the course of these four years, during which she has made unexpected discoveries while undergoing a startling metamorphosis. Since our shared experience has opened up new perspectives for us, I think our wedding will represent the most appropriate conclusion of this adventure.

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation revolves around the absence of what was supposed to be the main subject of my study, that is to say the contents and the development of cardinal Pole's programme for Church reform during his long Italian stay (1532-1553, preceded by a five-year sojourn between 1521 and 1526). In the course of these years, Reginald Pole emerged as one of the protagonists of the process through which the Catholic Church came to devise its response to the Protestant defiance and to the widespread demand for reform. Within this context, Pole came across a wide variety of projects and experiments of religious renewal, which had an impact, in different measure, on the shaping of and on the evolution of his own notion of reform. Pole's ecclesiastical career and intellectual trajectory, during the two decades he spent in Italy, offer therefore a unique observation point, in particular with regard to the real struggle for the reform of the Church that occurred within the Sacred College, often intersecting or even coinciding with the struggle for the papacy.

Before explaining how Pole's failure to formulate an actual programme of ecclesiastical renewal has become the primary focus of my analysis, it is appropriate to clarify the reasons for the choice of its chronological framework. Historically, the various phases of Pole's life have not been treated equally by those who have written about him. As discussed in chapter II, national belonging and religious opinions have significantly contributed to direct the biographers and scholars' attention either towards the English nobleman that crossed his cousin Henry VIII and later on went back to his native country, as a cardinal, to restore Catholicism during Mary Tudor's reign, or to the young student who remained in Italy and rapidly climbed the ecclesiastical hierarchy, coming close to being elected pope while being involved in the widespread religious ferment. Rather than adding one more full biography to the endless series of works on Pole's life, I have decided to address myself exclusively to the years he spent in Italy. This might seem a regressive option, inasmuch as it apparently replicates the long-standing tendency on the part of Italian scholars to put the spotlight on Pole's rise to prominence as a cardinal and, above all, on his associations with people and groups that would come under suspicion (or be tried) for their heterodox beliefs. Furthermore, my intention of isolating the Italian phase stands in contrast to the direction of what are

generally regarded as the most authoritative recent studies on Pole, namely those by the late Thomas Mayer, who claimed that “putting the two chief phases – English and Italian – of Pole’s career together produced a (to me) surprisingly coherent figure”.¹ What surprises me instead is the increasing number of Anglo-American scholarly works about Pole (or other people close to him) that repeat stereotypes, mistakes and misinterpretation of the events unfolding in Italy at the time when Pole was there. The latest English biography, written by John Edwards,² is unfortunately no exception to this tendency, and also Mayer’s efforts, although commendable, have produced unsatisfactory (if not misleading) results as to the Italian phase of Pole’s life, not least because he basically skated around the questions raised by a good deal of inquisitorial sources.

Thus I have deemed it necessary to take a step backwards and start again from the stock of knowledge I have built through my previous studies on Pole’s intellectual trajectory between the 1530s and the early 1540s. I have no intention of stiffening the old boundaries between Italian and English historiography on Pole; on the contrary, writing a thesis on the “Italian Pole” in English aims precisely to open a serious dialogue by starting to break the language barrier that has too often divided these schools. For this reason, in many footnotes I have quoted and translated into English rather long passages from documents (namely Inquisition trials) which have not been taken into adequate account by Anglo-American historians who have dealt with Pole in the last two decades. What I have found out in the course of my research has led to an interpretation that adds new elements to both the opposed views on Pole currently in vogue, thus trying to shade some rigid categories of Italian historiography, on the one hand, and to correct some simplistic generalities, on the other. Moreover, an accurate assessment of Pole’s way of conceiving and implementing the reform of the Church, on the eve of and during the Council of Trent, will hopefully provide a sound basis for a critical appraisal of his subsequent attempt to restore Catholicism to Mary Tudor’s England.

In so far as one of my primary aims was to reconstruct a period of Pole’s life, my study has benefited from the historiographical debate on the biographical genre. The revival of a narrative way of writing history,³ which I consider favourably, can lead to interesting results if

¹ Thomas F. Mayer, ‘Cardinal Pole’s Concept of *Reformatio*: The *Reformatio Angliae* and Bartolomé Carranza’, in John Edwards, Ronald Truman (eds.), *Reforming Catholicism in the England of Mary Tudor. The Achievement of Friar Bartolomé Carranza* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 65-80 (66).

² John Edwards, *Archbishop Pole* (Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2014).

³ See Lawrence Stone, ‘The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History’, *Past & Present*, 85

seen in the context of reflections such as the one of Pierre Bourdieu on the “biographical illusion”.⁴ Bourdieu’s questioning of the linearity and coherence of individual lives (an implicit assumption of “traditional” biographies) has led in recent years to some alternative approaches that have been effectively described by Jacques Revel.⁵ My study is close to them in that:

- it deals with a limited period (1521-1553) of Pole’s life, which is not considered, therefore, as a coherent whole;
- it tries to set it in the wider context of the conflictual period between Reformation and Counter-reformation;
- it does so by adopting a specific text (*De reformatione Ecclesiae*) as a privileged point of access to the interpretation of both Pole’s religious and political experience and the process he was involved in.

By overcoming the rigidity of the categories of periodisation and of institutional structures, this approach allows to detect the variety of choices that were available to Pole and the possibilities for him, as well as for his contemporaries, to steer the events in a different direction than the one that eventually prevailed. Pole acted, indeed, in a period during which many paths were still open and there existed the opportunity to alter, to some extent, the course of events. Changing circumstances, at a personal, political and cultural level, often defined or redefined, in turn, the available choices.

The relation between Pole’s personal experience and other contemporary experiments of ecclesiastical reform is a crucial component of the first of the three parts into which this dissertation is divided. The purpose of the first part, which consists of chapters I and II, has been firstly to examine the diverse dimensions and interpretations of the idea of reform in the XVI century (chapter I). Secondly, I have tried to solve, within a wider interpretative scheme, the biographical difficulties posed by a character whose life has always been, in the first instance, a source of controversies rather than an object of historical investigation. Thus, in

(1979), pp. 3-24.

⁴ See Pierre Bourdieu, ‘L’illusion biographique’, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 62/63 (1986), pp. 69-72.

⁵ See Jacques Revel, ‘La biographie comme problème historiographique’, in Hans Erich Bödeker (ed.), *Biographie schreiben* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003), pp. 327-348. Cf. Sabina Loriga, ‘La biografia come problema’, in Jacques Revel (ed.), *Giochi di scala. La microstoria alla prova dell’esperienza* (Roma: Viella, 2006), pp. 201-226.

chapter II, I have traced the different meanings and purposes which writing about Pole has assumed in over five centuries. This approach has proved to be fruitful, insofar as it has helped devise a methodological and conceptual framework that, in turn, has allowed me to overcome traditional historiographical paradigms concerning the so-called process of reform and the Council of Trent.

This framework has guided the writing of the second part of the thesis, which is composed of chapter III and IV and is centred on the eve of the Council of Trent, from the early forties until the opening sessions of the assembly. The whole section is devoted not so much to the concrete contents of Pole's programme for reform – which are hardly present in his manuscripts or his correspondence – but rather to the peculiar doctrinal and philosophical components of his notion of reform and his ecclesiology, on the one hand, and the ways in which Pole and his group tried to promote and implement it, on the other. In so doing I have ended up transforming what could be a weak point of this work (if not a potential risk of failure), that is to say the very absence of any concrete measure of ecclesiastical reformation in Pole's writings, into a pivotal theme. In this respect, every chapter also provides a different answer to the key research question, which concerns the contradiction between Pole's silence on the practical steps towards the renewal of the Church and the high expectations he aroused as a Church reformer.

In the third chapter, the philological analysis of the manuscript versions of Pole's *De reformatione Ecclesiae* has led me to discern a deliberate juxtaposition of contradictory philosophical and doctrinal notions. Pole's "radical eclecticism" paralleled his reluctance to choose between two virtually antithetical conceptions of reform, and represented his own strategy towards the reunification of the Church, a constant aspiration throughout his life as well as a necessary corollary of his vision of reform. Far from remaining at a mere theoretical level, this approach to the issues of ecclesiastical unity and reform inspired the very process of writing, in that Pole's *De reformatione*, like many other books which were produced or translated in the context of his group of Viterbo, was part of a propaganda campaign aimed at multiple audiences.

The complex formation of the Viterbese circle of the *spirituali*, as well as the strategies they pursued on the eve of and during the first years of the Council, is the subject of the fourth chapter. In the first part, I have shown in which way the varied interactions between other

similar groups, in Spain and in Italy, paved the way for the collective experience and the activities of proselytism carried out by the so-called “Viterbese Church”. In the second part, I have examined instead the purposes and the channels of the *spirituali*’s propaganda campaign, which did not just amount to proselytism, but coincided to a large extent with an undeclared “reform through other means”. Informed by Pole’s flexible theology, this non-institutional attempt at reform was also the result of the cardinal’s peculiar conception of the Church as a thin shell, which proved to be all-embracing insofar as it was emptied of its internal hierarchical structure. A reform of this kind, undertaken *de facto* instead of being previously described in written form, could not be implemented by having recourse to imperial diets, religious colloquies and the council, but rather to the same means through which it was promoted, namely preaching, printing and pastoral activity.

In the third part of the thesis, the focus shifts to the conciliar years, from 1545 until Pole’s return to England in 1553. This means that, after having elucidated the doctrinal and philosophical features of Pole’s conception of reform, as well as his attempts to promote it, I have assessed how he behaved under the pressure of competing projects and of the struggle for the papacy, with the consequent interference of the Inquisition on the Council and on the very papal elections. My hypothesis is that Pole’s experience contributes to overcoming the two contrasting historiographical interpretations of the reform process either as a homogeneous “reform tendency” or as a dialectic between the moderate *spirituali* and the *intransigenti* (or *zelanti*). Instead of continuing reflecting these divisions, as it has been the case so far, I have tried to go beyond them by exploring more systematically the variety of choices and the room for manoeuvre that were available to Pole and other people, who acted within very fluid boundaries, both in doctrinal and institutional terms. It is not a matter of coming up with “the night in which all cows are black”, as some historians have done in recent years through the adoption of the category of “reform tendency”, a sort of continuum embracing the whole variety of positions that emerged within the sacred college. At the heart of the teleological perspective underpinning these categories lies the assumption that the Tridentine decrees represented both the crowning moment of enduring reform trends and the beginning of an expansive Catholic revival. The idea of continuity is also conveyed by the periodisations and the interpretative categories adopted by many Catholic historians, among whom John O’Malley, who has suggested abandoning the heavily ideological definitions of

“Catholic Reformation” and “Counter-Reformation” in favour of the seemingly more objective “early modern Catholicism”. I think it can be more fruitful – and this is what I am trying to carry on – to explore the kind of “third ways” like that of Pole, who acted in fact in a context that was not merely bipolar. It must be pointed out, however, that in light of Pole’s radical ecclesiological opinions the stances he adopted can not be simply regarded as a moderate middle way.

The fifth chapter consequently links Pole’s silence on the practical measures of an ecclesiastical reform to his implicit dissolution of the hierarchical structure of the Church, a position that deeply informed his approach to reform. In Pole’s perspective, the notion of a parallel “Church of the chosen ones” also merged with the prophetic simulacrum of the *pastor angelicus*, onto which he (like many other people before him) projected his hopes of a renewed and purified Church. A large part of this chapter is devoted to the information provided, during an Inquisition trial, by Lorenzo Davidico, a priest who had associated with Pole and Morone. The witness mentioned a book in which *De reformatione* (presumably the treatise written by Pole) was followed by a papal prophecy that confirmed the identity between the English cardinal and the long-awaited Angelic Pope. Although the existence of this book is only hypothetical, the gist of Davidico’s deposition is corroborated by a series of elements, notably his detailed description of the frontispiece of the book. Probably a prefiguration of Pole’s papal coat of arms, this striking image was indeed a perfect graphic summary of the contents of *De reformatione*.

In the light of these findings, the binomials “reform and papacy” and “reform and council” can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Both Pole’s apparent disinterest during and after the conclave of 1549-1550 (when he missed being elected) and his irresolute behaviour in the course of the Council can not be simply explained by his well-known hesitancy and by his tendency to avoid conflict. The hypothesis I have formulated links instead Pole’s passivity in the institutional settings with the different answers (contained in each chapter) to the aforementioned contradiction between Pole’s omission of the measures of reform and the high expectations he aroused as a reformer. Accordingly, his decision not to choose between different models of reform (Chapter III), his attempted reform through non-institutional means (Chapter IV) and his irresoluteness during the Council and the conclave (Chapter V) paralleled the specific combination of his stances on reform and of his conception

of the papal office, which revolved around the prophetic figure of the Angelic Pope. Under the influence of Joachimist prophetism, Pole came to conceive a peculiar coexistence – which did not entail any friction – between the exoteric Church, with its visible hierarchical structure, and the esoteric Church, made up of all those who are instructed and guided by the holy spirit.

Chapter VI moves the focus backwards, thus opening up the perspective by taking into consideration the long formation of the myth of the Angelic Pope. In so doing, I have also paid attention to the papal vaticinations, the enormous success of which stimulated the production of numerous imitations. Among these, one can definitely include the above-mentioned prophecy that presented Pole as the future Angelic Pope. Given that most of these vaticinations had a peculiar combination of texts and pictures, the important role played by graphic means of expression has been discussed in the last part of the chapter, with particular attention to the experiences that proved particularly significant for Pole. In this respect, it has also been necessary to examine the heterogeneous constellation that contributed (whether directly or indirectly) to making Pole susceptible not only to this prophetic tradition, but also to esoteric interests, related for example to the study of the Kabbalah or astrology, which contributed, in turn, to remoulding the myth of the Angelic Pope (chapter VII). To a certain extent, chapters VI and VII constitute, therefore, the symmetrical equivalent of the fourth one, which counterbalances, in the second part of the thesis, the philological and intellectual perspective of Chapter III by employing a more socio-cultural approach. Lastly, the closing remarks about the temporal perspective underpinning Pole's vision of Church reform complement my critique of traditional historiographical categories, inasmuch as they question again, from a different point of view, the validity of the assumption (either for apologetic or polemical purposes) that the Council of Trent represented an epoch-making event.

CHAPTER I

Debating Reform in XVI-Century European Christendom. The Experience of Reginald Pole on the Eve of the Council of Trent

1. *A Durable and Controversial Ideal*

“It is way easier to say how much this reform is needed rather than to find the way in which one can and must do it”.¹ The emblematic dilemma voiced by an anonymous papal nuncio in the third decade of the XVI century lies at the very heart of the religious crisis that affected early modern Europe: although the need for reform, even before Luther’s 95 theses, was shared by many throughout the continent and at every level of society, the contents and the means of such a reform were subject to considerable uncertainty and disagreement. The widespread debates and struggles over how to fill and accomplish the receptacle concept of “religious reform” thus contributed to turning this potentially unifying ideal into a divisive issue, which proved to be one of the major powerful factors behind the conflicts that steeped Europe in blood between the resolution of the Western Schism (with the 1417 election of pope Martin V by the Council of Constance) and the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648. During this period – which can be subsumed, in many respects, under the hotly disputed question of Church reform – European Christendom progressively lost its relative religious homogeneity and ended up being divided into several churches and sects. This process developed in inverse proportion to the one that contemporaneously affected the papacy: after the crisis of the so-called Avignon captivity (1309-1378) and the subsequent disputes among

¹ “Di questa riforma è assai più facile di dire quanto ella sia necessaria che ritrovare il modo come si possa et debba fare”. *Concilium Tridentinum. Diariorum, Actorum, Epistularum, Tractatum nova collectio*, 13 vols., ed. Societas Goerresiana (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1901-1938; henceforward: CT), XII, p. 48; cf. note 1. The author of this speech has not been clearly identified. The initials M. F. C. might refer either to Francesco Contarini or, perhaps more likely, to Francesco Chiericati. The latter had already been papal nuncio in England during Leo X’s pontificate. Appointed bishop of Teramo, he was later sent to Germany and entrusted with the task of enforcing the edict of Worms (1521), which banned the writings of Luther, declaring him a heretic. In 1522 Chiericati took part in the imperial Diet of Nuremberg. As a nuncio of Adrian VI, he read the pope’s instructions, which emphasised the necessity of the pacification in Germany, the concord among the Christian princes and the fight against the Turks. Chiericati left the Diet on the 16th of February 1523. See Mario Rosa’s entry (‘Adriano VI’) in *Enciclopedia dei Papi*, 3 vols. (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia italiana, 2000), III, pp. 64-70.

rival claimants to the papal throne, the institution eventually managed to regain both its sovereignty over the territories of central Italy and its spiritual authority on the part of the Christendom that remained faithful to it.

Admittedly, the attractiveness of the idea of reform, however conceived, was not a peculiarity of this age alone; on the contrary, it has deeply and continuously influenced the beliefs and practices of the Western Church since the very first centuries of its history.² One of the reasons for this enduring influence lies in the original intimate connection of the Christian reform ideal with the evangelical and Pauline doctrine of man's *reformatio* (μεταμόρφωσις) or *renovatio ad imaginem Dei* [restoration to the image of God].³ The permanence of this close link, the ambit and meaning of which were increasingly broadened and enriched, has frequently come to render the notion of *perennis reformatio* [perpetual reformation] a fashionable rhetorical *topos* that has exerted a significant impact in diverse circumstances. On the one hand, for instance, the slogan *Ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* [the Church reformed and always in need of reform], which has been traditionally imputed to the Protestant reformers, even though apparently none of them ever enunciated it, is still a very popular motto of numerous Reformed churches. On the other hand, in the course of the Second Vatican Council the analogous aspiration to a ceaseless process of Church reform was animated by the opposite spirit of *aggiornamento*, that is to say the attempt to bring the ecclesiastical institution up to date, thus recognising the radical social and cultural transformations that had occurred in the modern world.⁴

The forward-looking historical perspective underpinning the Vatican II's notion of reform could hardly differ more radically from the temporal outlook that was generally accepted in the XVI century. No matter how dissimilar the contents of the various programmes for reform might be, they all shared the same principle of recovering the alleged original values of the Christian Church of the earliest times. Cardinal Pole himself, in the manuscripts of his *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, identified the reform of the Church with the restoration of its "good and pulchritudinous" pristine form, which had been deprecatingly altered and ruined by men

² For a bibliography on the history of the idea of reform in the Western Church, see John W. O'Malley, 'Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's *aggiornamento*', in his *Rome and the Renaissance. Studies in Culture and Religion* (Aldershot: Variorum, Ashgate, 1981), XV, p. 573, note 2.

³ See Gerhart Burian Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers* (Cambridge (MA, USA): Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 2.

⁴ See O'Malley, 'Reform, Historical Consciousness', pp. 584-589.

in the course of the centuries.⁵ The question of fidelity to the original evangelical values was to become one of the most controversial matters in the debates between members of the Catholic hierarchy and Protestant reformers, both of whom struggled to present themselves as the only legitimate repositories of the purest and most genuine form of the apostolic Church. The accusations of being “innovators” were therefore reciprocal: Catholic writers imputed to the Protestants the introduction of principles that were extraneous to the authentic Christian tradition, while Luther, in his 1539 *Von den Konziliis und Kirchen* [*On the Councils and the Church*], charged the popes with the subversion of old articles of faith and the invention of new ones.⁶ In the *Institutio religionis christianae*, Calvin as well denounced the councils’ “arbitrariness and contempt for God”, which led to the creation of new dogmas.⁷

If such a backward-looking model of reform could produce radical long-lasting transformations in the structure of the early modern European Christianity, this was largely due to the peculiar tangled interactions among the multiple dimensions it assumed and the disparate ways in which it was interpreted. In order to detect and disentangle the heterogeneous dimensions and meanings of the idea of reform in the XVI century, a unique observation point can be located in the progress of Reginald Pole’s career and intellectual trajectory. A Plantagenet cousin of Henry VIII, cardinal of the Roman Church, first president of the Council of Trent and last Catholic archbishop of Canterbury, during his life Reginald Pole (1500-1558) came across a wide variety of projects and experiments of religious reform,

⁵ “Reformari quidem Ecclesiam dicitur cum ea ad primae formae pulchritudinem revocatur; reformationis enim nomen deformitatem quandam et formam ab ea quam Deus instituit recedentem indicat. Quae autem cuiusque rei forma a Deo instituta est, eam et bonam et pulchram esse fateamur: necesse est omnia enim quaecunque fecit Deus in primo suo ortu, ut inquit Scriptura, erant valde bona. Homines autem sunt qui hanc rerum formam a Deo constitutam corrumpunt ac destruunt. Ergo, cum de Ecclesiae reformatione loquimur, de modo loquimur revocandi Ecclesiam, ab hominibus corruptam et deformatam, ad eam formam quae illi a Deo institutam fuit”. Vatican City, Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (henceforward ACDF), *Stanza storica*, E-6 a, fasc. 2, f. 1r. Cf. a different manuscript of *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, at the National Library of Naples (henceforward BNN), MS. IX.A.14, where Pole speaks of reforming equally the Church and men (f. 1v).

⁶ “Solchs mus ich hieneben also anzeigen, denn es sind des Bapsts heuchler in so große Narrheit gefallen, dass sie nicht anders meinen, die Concilia haben Macht und Recht, neue Artickel des Glaubens zu säßen und die altern zu endern [...]. Habens auch Concilia gethan, noch können thun, denn die Artickel des Glaubens müssen nicht auff erden durch die Concilia als aus neuer heimlicher Eingebung wachsen, sondern vom Himel durch den heiligen Geist öffentlich gegeben und offenbart sein, sonst sinds nicht Artickel des Glaubens wie wir hernach hören werden”. *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 127 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883-2007; henceforward *Luthers Werke*, WA), *Schriften*, L, p. 551.

⁷ “Interim sua libidine contemptoque Dei verbo cudunt dogmata, quibus postea fidem hac ratione haberi postulant. Nec enim christianum esse, nisi qui in omnia sua dogmata, tam affirmativa quam negativa, certo consentiat, si non explicita fide, tamen implicita: quia penes Ecclesiam sit condere novos fidei articulos”. *Corpus Reformatorum*, 101 vols., 1834-1959 (henceforward CR), XXX, col. 853 (*Institutio*, IV, 8, 10).

which had an impact, in different measure, on the shaping of and on the evolution of his own ideas and attempts at reform.

In this chapter, the survey of the diverse figures and of the conceptions that proved to be significant, to varying degrees, for Pole's attitudes towards reform will help outline, therefore, the disparate meanings and dimensions of this popular idea, as well as their multifaceted relations. In the first part, I will examine some pre-Tridentine uncoordinated experiments of reform at diocesan and monastic level. The pastoral experiences of two friends of Pole's – John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona – provided inspiration for the positions that were adopted in the first commission for Church reform, of which Pole was a member. In the culturally stimulating environment of the Benedictine monasteries of Padua and Venice, Pole had instead the opportunity to closely study the Scripture and the Fathers, while also reading some works of the Protestant reformers. In the second part, I will discuss in what way the contrasting assessments of these early attempts at reform have brought forth different historiographical accounts and periodisations. The interpretation I suggest, which places emphasis on the shift between distinct conceptions of reform as a major factor of periodisation, will lead to the analysis of what I label as the cultural dimension of religious reform. The assumption that a profound cultural crisis underlay the moral decay of the Church was common to the frequently divergent proposals which Pole could get to know in the writings of many humanists (in particular Erasmus, whom Pole greatly admired), but also in the works of Luther and Calvin. The suggested remedies for this predicament – all of which were aimed at retrieving the allegedly authentic evangelical piety – ranged over new programmes of education, the regeneration of the theological structures of the Christianity and the philological recovery of the sacred texts. Lastly, the third part will be devoted to the peculiar interactions between the ideal return to the evangelical origins of the Christianity and the widespread apocalyptic expectations that characterised the first half of the XVI century. The combination of these two strands played a key part in shaping opposite visions of the papacy, which were epitomised in the antithetical images of the pope as Antichrist or as *pastor angelicus*. As will be shown later on, Pole's personal vicissitudes made him particularly susceptible to the diffuse eschatological anxieties and speculations. Within this perspective, his ideas of reform and his notion of the papacy

influenced each other, thus producing a powerful vision that could appeal to a great variety of people.

It is presumably in Pole's multifaceted idea of reform that lies one of the decisive reasons for the high expectations he aroused and for the aura of myth that surrounded his figure both during his lifetime and in the centuries after his death. The second chapter will therefore revolve around the changeable manifestations of Pole's myth in the flow of biographies that have been written from his death until the present day. Particular attention will be paid to the XX-century reorientation of Pole's biographies towards the historiographical debates on the process of Church reformation. In the final section of the chapter, I will elucidate the periodisation, structure and methodology of my study.

2.1. *Experiments of Reform at Diocesan and Monastic Level*

When Reginald Pole decided to leave England at the end of the thirties, owing to his incipient disagreement with Henry VIII over the matter of the divorce from Catherine of Aragon, he hardly hesitated to head back towards the Republic of Venice, where he had already sojourned between 1521 and 1526. Like many other young Englishmen, he had completed his *cursus studiorum* in the prestigious university of Padua, which had traditionally attracted numerous foreign professors and students.⁸ Pole's tutors at Magdalen College Oxford, Thomas Linacre and William Latimer, had also studied in Padua during the last decades of the XV century. It was they who had encouraged the young Pole to continue his studies at the Paduan university. Among the foreign students in Padua, Pole had established a friendship with Thomas Lupset (a former pupil of John Colet and collaborator of Erasmus on the edition of the new Testament) and with the Flemish humanist Cristophe de Longueil (Longolius), who died prematurely at the age of 34. A few days before his death, Longolius left Pole his extensive collection of Greek and Latin classics, a donation Pole acknowledged by writing Longolius's biography, which prefaced the 1524 Florentine edition of Longolius's correspondence.⁹

⁸ On the English students at Padua, see Jonathan Woolfson, *Padua and the Tudors: English Students in Italy, 1485-1603* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 1998).

⁹ See Alessandro Pastore, *Marcantonio Flaminio. Fortune e sfortune di un chierico nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1981), pp. 37-38.

When Pole went back there in 1532, the renewed acquaintance with his old friends stimulated an increasing involvement in the reflections on the religious issues that had become inescapable after Luther's resounding protest. At the confluence of the trading routes between Europe and the East, as early as the twenties of the XVI century the Republic of Venice had grown into a nodal centre for the spread of the Protestant doctrines in Italy.¹⁰ The ideas of the Protestant reformers were diffused by German students of the university of Padua, by preachers of diverse religious orders, by scholars who had found refuge in Venice or by the merchants who hid in the German warehouse (*Fondaco dei Tedeschi*) the Italian translations of the reformers' works printed in Basel or in Geneva. A growing number of books and pamphlets, moreover, was published by the Venetian editors and printing houses, which gained a leading role in the European publishing market.¹¹

As the only Italian state that remained independent after the sack of Rome of 1527, the Republic of Venice also provided hospitality to many nobles and clergymen who shared a sincere desire to reform the Church, although their objectives, methods and strategies significantly differed. Within a context where the government of the Republic was traditionally and inextricably linked with the administration of the ecclesiastical institution, Catholicism represented a fundamental social prop and an essential component of a common identity. Far from representing a mere sum of dogmas and traditions, it ensured respect for the authorities, as well as the maintenance of stability and order, by supplying the indispensable norms for common life. Within this context, the Protestant Reformation did not deteriorate the attachment of the Venetian nobles and clergymen to the "religion of the fathers", but provided them with doubts, problems and experiences through which they could critically reappraise their own faith.¹²

¹⁰ See John J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies. Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 1993).

¹¹ See Silvano Cavazza, 'Libri in volgare e propaganda eterodossa: Venezia 1543-1547', in Adriano Prosperi and Albano Biondi (eds.), *Libri, idee e sentimenti religiosi nel Cinquecento italiano* (Modena: Panini, 1987), pp. 9-37 (9-28); Paul F. Grendler, *L'Inquisizione romana e l'editoria a Venezia. 1540-1605* (Roma: Il Veltro, 1983).

¹² See Gaetano Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini. Ricerche sul patriziato veneziano agli inizi del Seicento* (Venezia-Roma: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1958), pp. 40-41. See also Gaetano Cozzi, 'Ambiente veneziano, ambiente veneto. Governanti e governati nel Dominio di qua dal Mincio nei secoli XV-XVIII', in Girolamo Arnaldi and Manlio Pastore Stocchi (eds.), *Storia della cultura veneta*, 6 vols. (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 1976-1986), IV/2, pp. 495-539 (pp. 496-497); Paolo Prodi, 'The Structure and Organization of the Church in Renaissance Venice: Suggestions for Research', in J. R. Hale (ed.), *Renaissance Venice* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), pp. 409-430 (pp. 413-415); Massimo Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo vescovo ed eretico. Riforma della Chiesa e Inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006), pp. 56-60.

In 1513, for example, two members of the Venetian aristocracy who studied at Padua, Tommaso Giustiniani and Vincenzo Quirini, had authored the *Libellus ad Leonem X*, one of the most ambitious programmes of Church reform before Luther's protest. Their epistle was written when they had already opted for withdrawal into the Camaldoli hermitage, as a consequence of a profound religious crisis. Gasparo Contarini too, a friend of the two monks and a future mentor for Pole, had experienced at the age of 28 a spiritual crisis that closely resembles the so-called *Turmerlebnis* [Tower Experience] of Luther.¹³ Despite his decision to retain his engagement with the government of the Republic, thus refusing the monastic choice of his friends, Contarini developed a new intense religious sensibility that would constantly accompany and steer his future involvement in the Roman curia since his appointment as cardinal in 1535. He was only one of the illustrious figures whom pope Paul III decided to nominate as cardinals during the first years of his pontificate. Among them, there were bishops and abbots who had already tried to undertake personal experiments of reform either in their dioceses or in their religious orders. In different measure, all these people had close ties with and exerted a significant influence on Pole, who ended up collaborating with some of them in the committee appointed by Paul III to devise a programme of reform "for the benefit of the Christian commonwealth".¹⁴

Pole would have probably never taken part in this commission, "on behalf of the English nation" ["pro natione anglica"], had it not been for the execution of his fellow Englishman John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, who was sentenced to death in June 1535 (two months after his appointment as cardinal) for refusing to take the oath under Henry VIII's Act of Succession.¹⁵ It was the astonishment at the executions of John Fisher and Thomas More that induced Pole to voice his opposition to Henry's divorce and to his questioning of the pope's spiritual supremacy. In *De ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione* (better known as *De unitate*), Pole highly praised, therefore, his two friends that had been brutally murdered. John Fisher, in

¹³ See Hubert Jedin, 'Un'esperienza della torre del giovane Contarini', published in his *Chiesa della fede Chiesa della storia. Saggi scelti*, con un saggio introduttivo di Giuseppe Alberigo (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1972), pp. 606-623.

¹⁴ "Ad rei publicae christianae beneficium". I quote from the papal brief (19 July 1536) that summoned Pole in Rome. It is published in *Epistolarum Reginaldi Poli S. R. E. cardinalis et aliorum ad ipsum collectio*, Angelo Maria Querini (ed.), 5 vols. (Brixiae: excudebat Joannes-Maria Rizzardi, 1744-1757; henceforward Pole, *Epistolae*), III, pp. 466-467.

¹⁵ John Fisher had been kept prisoner in the Tower of London for one year when Paul III appointed him cardinal. As soon as the news got to London, Henry VIII did not allow the cardinal hat to be delivered to Fisher. He declared, instead, that he would send to Rome Fisher's head.

particular, was extolled not only for his martyrdom, but also for his demeanour as a bishop. Some historians have indeed described Fisher as an *ante litteram* example of Tridentine bishop, for his exercise of pastoral care seems to anticipate the decrees of the Council of Trent concerning diocesan duties.¹⁶ Despite his appointment to one of the poorest dioceses in England, Fisher had not followed the example of many of his predecessors, who had opted for more remunerative bishoprics. His long-term residence in the diocese of Rochester, as well as his efforts to fulfil principles of temperance and frugality, were aimed at “encouraging his priests by his manner of life and by his interest in their welfare”.¹⁷ Through frequent visitations of parish churches and monasteries within his diocese, Fisher tried to monitor the conduct of priests and the observance of monastic vows. The implementation of a severe discipline, which could go as far as depriving unworthy priests of their benefices, went together with a particular attention to the education of the clergy, the correct administration of the sacraments and the contents of preaching, which he himself studiously cultivated.¹⁸

Similar objectives animated the pastoral activity of another close acquaintance of Pole's: the bishop of Verona Gian Matteo Giberti.¹⁹ The programme for pastoral reform of the Palermo-born prelate was actually enforced in the second phase of his ecclesiastical career, which had begun in the shadow of pope Clement VII. From the exceptionally powerful position of chief of the Apostolic Datary, Giberti had played a primary role within the curia. As leading foreign policy adviser of the pope, he had been the main architect of the anti-imperial and pro-French approach that led to the disastrous enterprise of the League of Cognac. Only the calamitous events of the sack of Rome and his replacement in the Datary spurred Giberti towards his bishopric of Verona, where he took up residence and promoted a thorough endeavour to reform the administration and the religious life of his diocese. The

¹⁶ See for example Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London-New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 19-21.

¹⁷ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 20. On John Fisher and his pastoral activity, cf. Thomas Bailey, *The Life and Death of the Renowned John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, Who Was Beheaded on Tower-Hill, the 22nd of June, 1535. Comprising the Highest and Hidden Transactions of Church and State in the Reign of King Henry VIII; Diverse Moral, Historical and Political Animadversions upon Cardinal Wolsey, Sir Thomas More, Martin Luther Etc., and a Full Relation of Queen Katharine's Divorce* (London: P. Meighan, 1739; original edition: 1655); Richard Lawrence Smith, *John Fisher and Thomas More: Two English Saints* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935). See also Cecilia A. Hatt (ed.), *English Works of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester (1469-1535): Sermons and Other Writings. 1520 to 1535* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

¹⁹ On Giberti, see Adriano Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e Controriforma. G. M. Giberti (1495-1543)* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1969).

sharpened asceticism he developed after the sack of Rome directed his pastoral approach towards a marked severity. This found expression in the *Constitutiones Gibertinae*, a system of norms that imposed a rigorous control on the parish clergy, on indulgence preachers and on the regular orders, especially the female ones, which underwent frequent visitations. The *Constitutiones* also prescribed the suspension of immoral priests and even excommunication for the most serious faults.²⁰ While carrying out his diocesan reform, Giberti could rely on the cooperation of his old friend Gian Pietro Carafa, who had been his companion at the Roman Oratory of Divine Love, a lay confraternity that aimed at combining devotional practices with charitable works. Carafa, like Giberti, had left Rome after the sack of Rome and had found refuge in the Republic of Venice, where he attended to the creation of the new religious order of the Theatines. To this aim, Giberti's lasting closeness to pope Clement VII proved to be a useful resource for Carafa, who managed to obtain a new house for the Theatines in 1525.²¹

Giberti's reform, however, was not confined only to the restoration of discipline, but provided support for debtors (through the *monti di pietà*) and relief to the poor, who could receive food, clothing and money supplied by the philanthropic Society of Charity. Giberti also brought about innovations in liturgy and in devotional practices. In order to foster the worship of the Sacrament, for instance, he encouraged the installation in each church of the tabernacle, where the Blessed Sacrament was to be preserved. Furthermore, he introduced the ringing of a bell during the mass to signal the elevation of the Host. He also urged priests to give weekly homilies in an easily understandable language, and sought to bring renowned preachers and scholars in his diocese.²² In the last months of 1535 (when Pole was working on his *De unitate*), one of these scholars, the Flemish Hebraist Johann van Kampen,²³ delivered a series of biblical lectures that aroused considerable interest within the circle of Giberti's

²⁰ See Gian Matteo Giberti, *Constitutiones* (Verona: Antonio Putelleto, 1542).

²¹ See Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, pp. 133-136.

²² See *ibid.*, p. 137.

²³ Johann van Kampen was a former professor of Leuven's Trilingual College. In 1533 he had travelled to Venice in order to meet the Hebrew grammarian Elia Levita, a protégé of cardinal Giles (Egidio) of Viterbo. See Alessandro Pastore, *Marcantonio Flaminio. Fortune e sfortune di un chierico nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1981), pp. 71, 82 and note 54. See also p. 83, note 58 for a short bibliography on Johann van Kampen.

friends and acquaintances,²⁴ among whom Pole,²⁵ his friend Alvise Priuli,²⁶ Gasparo Contarini and the humanist poet Marcantonio Flaminio.²⁷ Despite a previous *disputatio*, Johann van Kampen had also been praised as a “clever man” [“homo acutus”] by Melanchthon, who acknowledged that he had wisely and “wisely” [“prudenter”] interpreted the Pauline epistles.²⁸

During the first half of the thirties, Pole found a similar intellectually stimulating environment in the Benedictine abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice. Its newly appointed abbot, Gregorio Cortese, was designated to San Giorgio in the same year (1532) when Pole got back to Italy. In such a difficult situation for Pole, who had been requested by Henry VIII to express his opinion on the divorce matter, Gregorio Cortese proved himself to be a wise and considerate friend to him.²⁹ In the quiet gardens of the abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore, Pole found therefore a restful harbour where he had the opportunity to devote many hours to religious and philosophical conversations with clergymen, scholars and members of the aristocracy. Among them, he met the Mantuan monk Benedetto Fontanini, who started to write the first version of *The Benefit of Christ* when he moved to the Sicilian abbey of San Nicolò l’Arena, near Mount Etna.³⁰

In the first half of the XV century, San Giorgio Maggiore had joined the Paduan Benedictine congregation of Santa Giustina as a consequence of the wide-ranging reform

²⁴ Johann van Kampen recalled his biblical lectures in the letter of 15 May 1536 to his Polish friend Johann Dantiscus (Jan Dantyszek), prince-bishop of Warmia and bishop of Chelmno. He wrote that, during the previous winter in Verona, he had explained the books of the prophets, Paul’s epistles, the book of Job and the Pentateuch. See *ibid.*, p. 83, note 58.

²⁵ See Pole, *Epistolae*, I, p. 433 (letter to Contarini; 8th February 1536): “Ecce tibi a Verona Campensis noster ad me venit, eo consilio, ut hinc statim recta ad te proficiscatur, et una cum eo patavio Priolus noster, quem etiam, ut video, ad aliquem diem hospitem es habiturus, ut in annos Campensem, a quo miranda audio de eo progressu, quem in libris veteris Testamenti cum Veronensi fecit, qui aegre eum, et tamen libenter, cum ad te proficisceretur, dimisit”.

²⁶ As proven by two letters of Priuli to Ludovico Beccadelli (Liège, 28th June and 20th July 1537). See Pastore, *Marcantonio Flaminio*, p. 84, note 59.

²⁷ See Marcantonio Flaminio, *Lettere*, Alessandro Pastore (ed.) (Roma: Edizioni dell’Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1978), pp. 24, 27 (letters of Flaminio to Contarini, January 1536 and 16th February 1536).

²⁸ See Paolo Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano del Cinquecento. Questione religiosa e nicodemismo politico* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per l’età moderna e contemporanea, 1979), p. 68.

²⁹ On the friendship between Pole and Cortese, see the latter’s epistle to Contarini (Venice, 8th March 1536): “Mi resta adunque solo consolarmi con una viva immagine di Vostra Signoria reverendissima, che è il nostro signor Rainaldo, col quale sono ogni giorno, e ritrovandosi ancor lui in par desiderio, ci consoliamo l’un l’altro mutuis colloquiis per la maggior parte di quello che desideriamo”. *Gregorii Cortesii, monachi casinatis, S. R. E. cardinalis, omnia quae huc usque colligi potuerunt, sive ab eo scripta sive ad illum spectantia*, 2 vols. (Padova: Iosephus Cominus, 1774; henceforward: Cortese, *Opera*), I, p. 103. I will not follow the publisher’s use of italics to highlight Latin words.

³⁰ See Gigliola Fragnito, ‘Il cardinale Gregorio Cortese nella crisi religiosa del Cinquecento’, extract from *Benedictina*, 30 (1983), pp. 129-171, 417-459; 31 (1984), pp. 79-134 (Roma: Abbazia di San Paolo, 1983), pp. 17, 49-51.

which had been undertaken in Santa Giustina by the Venetian Ludovico Barbo.³¹ The primary purpose of Barbo had been the restoration of the Benedictine rule to its authentic meaning and the abolition of traditions that were alien to it. A series of disciplinary norms, as well as the scrupulous control of visitors, would secure the respect of the regular observance. At the same time, Barbo tried to advance devotional practices and to steer them towards asceticism. For this reason, the time devoted to liturgical offices (which had filled the most part of the day during the Middle Ages) was drastically reduced in favour of the time for meditation, while dormitories were substituted with the traditional cells along a corridor. After Barbo's death, the congregation had manifested a pronounced cultural impulse that had led to the foundation of schools for the education of the most gifted monks, most of whom were recruited from the ranks of the aristocracy. Libraries had been equipped with a larger number of books, whose titles reveal a clear humanist orientation: beyond the Greek and Latin classics, extensive sections were devoted to biblical exegesis (especially the Pauline epistles) and to the works of the Fathers, with a marked preference for the Greek.³² The most important libraries had thus attracted clergymen and laymen who shared the Benedictine's aversion to Scholastic theology and the aspiration to recover, through the reading and meditation of the Bible and of the Fathers' works, a religiosity perceived as more genuine.³³ In these monastic centres, as well as in other monasteries where it was relatively easy to get around the bans on heretical books, the strength of Luther's message was sensed rather early. "His doctrine looks good to us – the Benedictine monk Simone wrote to his family in 1524 – since in truth it is all based on the holy Scripture".³⁴ Shortly after his letter was sent, Simone (alias Francesco Negri) fled to Strasbourg. The abbot Gregorio Cortese too was an attentive reader of the reformers' writings, in which he carefully distinguished the "good" from the "venomous", as in the case of Calvin's *Institutio christianae religionis*.³⁵

³¹ On Ludovico Barbo and his experiment of monastic reform at Santa Giustina, see *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1960- ; henceforward *DBI*), VI, pp. 244-249.

³² See Barry Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars and the Reformation. The Congregation of Santa Giustina of Padua* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 2-8.

³³ See Fragnito, 'Il cardinale Gregorio Cortese', pp. 50, 53.

³⁴ "La sua dottrina ne par una bella cosa, perché in verità è fondata tuta su la sacra Scrittura". Quoted in Adriano Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande: storia di Giorgio Siculo e della sua setta* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000), p. 36. Simone's words were quoted by his brother in the letter which he wrote on 18 February 1524 to their father. See *ibid.*, p. 392, note 32.

³⁵ In the letter to Contarini, written from Padua on the 29th August 1540, Cortese stated: "Mi è poi capitata alle mani un'altr'opera, fatta per un Giovine Calvino luterano, intitolata *Institutio religionis christianae*, di molta e mala erudizione [...]. Al giudizio mio, sino al presente non è fatta opera alcuna luterana più atta ad infettare le

2.2. Conflicting Historiographical Interpretations of XVI-Century Reform Processes

These early experiments of reform at diocesan and monastic level have been assessed in different ways by scholars. A traditional historiographical interpretation has tended to downplay their significance in the process of Church reform, while attaching greater importance to the shock of the Protestant Reformation as the decisive stimulus for the beginning of the spiritual renewal and the institutional renovation of the Church.³⁶ Within this interpretation, the challenge posed by Luther has been depicted as bringing forth either a fiercely defensive Catholic reaction³⁷ or, in later readings, a more constructive revival that to a certain degree drew inspiration from Luther's ideas, in that it proved responsive to criticism of clerical abuses and to the emphasis on the redeeming indispensability of grace.³⁸ An opposed view, which has been mostly adopted by Catholic historians, has instead described the attempts at episcopal and monastic reform as important stages that were integral to a continuous and substantially coherent process of Catholic reformation. Under the influence of Hubert Jedin's categories of analysis, scholars sharing this view have tended to portray the figures of reforming bishops or abbots (like Barbo, Fisher and Giberti) as precursors that pointed towards the Council of Trent. The teleological perspective that underpins such accounts is based on the assumption that the Tridentine decrees represented both the crowning moment of long-lasting reform trends and the commencement of an expansive Catholic revival. In this outlook, Luther's protest is regarded, at best, as a mere factor of acceleration of earlier reform trends and aspirations. The continuity of this process has manifested itself in the periodisations and in the interpretative categories adopted by many Catholic historians,³⁹

menti, tanto il buono è mescolato con quel suo veneno". Franz Dittrich (ed.), *Regesten und Briefe des Cardinals Gasparo Contarini (1483-1542)* (Braunsberg: Huye's Buchhandlung [Emil Bender], 1881), p. 133. The whole letter is published in Cortese, *Opera*, I, pp. 135-137.

³⁶ See H. Outram Evennett, 'The Counter-Reformation', in Joel Hurstfield (ed.), *The Reformation Crisis* (London: Edward Arnold, 1965), pp. 58-75 (58).

³⁷ See for example Vivian Hubert Howard Green, *Renaissance and Reformation. A Survey of European History Between 1450 and 1660* (London: Edward Arnold, 1952).

³⁸ See Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation*, p. ix.

³⁹ Some examples of this kind of interpretation are: John C. Olin, *Catholic Reform from Cardinal Ximenes to the Council of Trent. 1495-1563. An Essay with Illustrative Documents and a Brief Study of St. Ignatius Loyola* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990); Nelson H. Minnich, *The Catholic Reformation: Council, Churchmen, Controversies* (Aldershot: Variorum, Ashgate, 1993); Guy Bedouelle, *La riforma del cattolicesimo*

as well as in the recent proposal of the Jesuit scholar John O'Malley, who has made the case for abandoning the heavily ideological definitions of "Catholic Reformation" and "Counter-Reformation" in favour of the apparently more neutral and objective "early modern Catholicism".⁴⁰

The argument for the durability and coherence of the reform tendencies within late medieval and early modern Catholicism can be seen in relation to the positions endorsed by British revisionist historians in the parallel debate on the English Reformation. During the eighties and the early nineties of the XX century, the works of Jack Scarisbrick, Eamon Duffy and Christopher Haigh significantly contributed to reversing the traditional theory that the disappointment of the English people with the moral corruption and the institutional decay of the late medieval Church had facilitated the rapid success of the Henrician Reformation.⁴¹ According to previous scholarship, Mary Tudor and Reginald Pole's attempt to restore Catholicism had been a short interlude between the Protestant turn of Edward VI's reign and the final Elizabethan Settlement.⁴² Through an extensive analysis of parish sources and popular religious practices, the revisionist historians (most of whom are Roman Catholics) have demonstrated instead that the implementation of the Reformation was not a straightforward process; on the contrary, it encountered considerable resistance at the very popular level, owing to the enduring vitality of late medieval Catholicism.⁴³ It is not by chance that, during the launch of the latest monograph on John Fisher (written by the archbishop of Westminster Vincent Nichols),⁴⁴ Scarisbrick and Duffy highly praised the apologetical book for highlighting the importance of Fisher's achievements. These are

(1480-1620) (Milano: Jaca Book, 2003); Nelson H. Minnich, *Councils of the Catholic Reformation: Pisa I (1409) to Trent (1545-1563)* (Aldershot: Variorum, Ashgate, 2008).

⁴⁰ See John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That. Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge [MA, USA]-London: 2000), pp. 119-143.

⁴¹ See Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), pp. 564-586 (565-566).

⁴² An example of this traditional historiographical narrative is Geoffrey Rudolph Elton, *Reform and Reformation. England 1509-1558* (Cambridge [MA, USA]-London: Harvard University Press, 1977).

⁴³ See Jack Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (London-New Haven [CT, USA]: Yale University Press, 1992); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations. Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Christopher Harper-Bill, *The Pre-Reformation Church in England. 1400-1530* (London-New York, 1996); Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith. Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2009); George W. Bernard, *The Late Medieval English Church: Vitality and Vulnerability Before the Break With Rome* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2013).

⁴⁴ Vincent Gerard Nichols, *St. John Fisher. Bishop and Theologian in Reformation and Controversy* (Stoke on Trent: Alive Publishing, 2011).

evidence, according to archbishop Nichols, that “the state of the Catholic Church in this country on the eve of the Reformation was not as lax, corrupt or inept as many had thought”.⁴⁵

Since the beginning of the XXI century, a new generation of British historians has explored different directions of research in order to escape from an excessively polarised debate, which has been adversely affected by the persistent “insular conception of the English Reformation”.⁴⁶ The failure to consider the English case as an integral part of European reformation movements is a symptom not only of a diffuse sense of exceptionalism, which has visible manifestations, for instance, in British politics, but also of a certain lack of familiarity with other European languages.⁴⁷ This deficit currently concerns, in fact, a not negligible part of anglophone scholarship. In the books published by prestigious English or (to a larger extent) American university presses, it is not so rare to find bibliographies that, even when dealing with the history of other countries, list almost exclusively English texts, while primary sources are increasingly quoted in English translation.

Some of the so-called “postrevisionist” historians of the English Reformation have thus sought to embark on a more systematic study of the cultural, political and social interconnections between the Reformation in England and on the continent.⁴⁸ The most favoured approach, however, has been to maintain the focus on Britain, while examining the multiple dimensions of its Reformation. On the one hand, at the geographical and political level, this approach has led to the acknowledgement that different reformations occurred in the British Isles and even during each of the Tudors’ reigns.⁴⁹ In this respect, the so-called Marian Counter-Reformation, though unsuccessful, assumes a particular significance as an emblematic example of the tortuous and unpredictable character of the English Reformation. On the other hand, in the cultural and social sphere, the formation of an autonomous

⁴⁵ Vincent Gerard Nichols, ‘St. John Fisher: the Man Behind the Myth’, *The Catholic Herald*, 25 November 2011, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Marshall, ‘(Re)defining the English Reformation’, p. 578.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 577-579.

⁴⁸ See, for instance, Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation. Europe’s House Divided. 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2003). MacCulloch’s work, though challenging, is partly affected by the same “linguistic deficit” of some anglophone historiography. This shortfall emerges, in particular, in the treatment of the Italian Reformation, where the absence of relevant Spanish and Italian secondary literature brings forth some inaccuracies or misrepresentations (pp. 213-218). Cf. Anne Overell, *Italian Reform and English Reformations, c. 1535-c. 1585* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

⁴⁹ See Felicity Heal, *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Ian Hazlett, *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland. An Introduction* (London-New York: T & T Clark, 2003); Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Protestant culture in Britain has been analysed from the viewpoints of gender and authority,⁵⁰ as well as from the perspective of vernacular religious writing within a broader European “literary history of crisis”, which subsumes all the XVI-century religious controversies.⁵¹

2.3. *Shifting Conceptions of Reform*

Whereas the multifaceted character and the plurality of dimensions of the early modern ideal of reform have been thoroughly and repeatedly investigated, the same cannot be said for the diverse meanings which were attached to this ideal in the course of the XVI century. By moving the focus of interest to the shift between different conceptions of reform, it is possible to overcome the misleading historiographical paradigms that describe the process of ecclesiastical reformation either as a twofold linear progress (which stresses the continuity of the reform tendencies, from the late Middle Ages until the final sessions of the Council of Trent) or as a sudden awakening of the Church from its previous torpor, under the severe impact of Luther’s protest. There is no doubt that experiments of episcopal and monastic renewal were carried out well before 1517; moreover, it is certainly true that Luther’s protest had a profound impact on the subsequent ecclesiastical initiatives towards reform. Nonetheless, what actually happened in the Catholic Church during the middle decades of the XVI century was neither an awakening nor a providential fulfilment of earlier uncoordinated efforts at reform. It was rather a progressive separation of two different conceptions of reform that had coexisted, until then, in many projects of renewal, thus being less clearly distinguishable than at the end of the process, when they became antithetical. It was on this very process that Luther’s influence proved to be most remarkable, for during the decades that ensued his protest – and not without internal conflicts – the Catholic Church opted gradually, yet more and more unwaveringly, for the opposite conception than the one developed by Luther.

The final decrees of the Council of Trent came to establish an unequivocal identity between the teachings of Christ and the apostles and the teaching of the institution itself,

⁵⁰ See Peter Marshall and Alec Ryrie (eds.), *The Beginnings of English Protestantism* (Cambridge-NewYork: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁵¹ Brian Cummings, *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 8.

which had retained unchanged the faith and doctrine of the apostolic age.⁵² As a consequence, the only reformation which could be undertaken consisted “in confirming dogmas and restoring customs within the Church”.⁵³ In other words, while it was possible – and, indeed, desirable – to correct vicious habits and to amend corrupted customs among the members of the Church, a reform of its doctrinal corpus was not even conceivable, given the alleged immutable character of its tradition. Such an approach had been epitomised as early as 1512 by the Prior General of the Augustinian order, Giles of Viterbo, in his inaugural speech at the Fifth Lateran Council. According to him, “men must be changed by religion, not religion by men”.⁵⁴ The same principle animated as well the harsh memorandum *De lutheranorum haeresi reprimenda et Ecclesia reformanda*, written in October 1532 by Gian Pietro Carafa.⁵⁵ In this document, addressed to pope Clement VII, the then bishop of Chieti linked the need for a moral renewal of the institution with the extirpation of the “Lutheran plague”. Carafa suggested therefore that the only reliable way of restoring the observance of the “shattered and deformed religious life” was to bring customs into compliance with the highest standards set by “good men”, who ought to be separated from the evil ones.⁵⁶ Four years later, Carafa worked together with Pole and other 7 cardinals in the reform commission convened at Roma by pope Paul III and chaired by Gasparo Contarini. The final report of the commission (entitled *Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia*)⁵⁷ was presented to the pope in March 1537. The resemblance between the structure of this document and that of Carafa’s 1532 memorandum indicates that Carafa may have played a prominent role in drafting the commission’s report,⁵⁸ which consists of a detailed list of abuses and possible remedies. The most urgent issues to be

⁵² See O’Malley, *Rome and the Renaissance*, XV, p. 582.

⁵³ “In confirmandis dogmatibus et in instaurandis in Ecclesia moribus”. *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, Giuseppe Alberigo, Perikle P. Joannou, Claudio Leonardi, Paolo Prodi, and Hubert Jedin (eds.) (Friburgi Brisgoviae: Herder, 1962; henceforward: COD), p. 640.

⁵⁴ “Homines per sacra immutari fas est, non sacra per homines”. *Sacrorum Conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 53 vols. (henceforward: Mansi); vols. 1-31/1: Giovanni Domenico Mansi (ed.) (Firenze: Antonio Zatta, 1759-1798); vols. 31/2-53: Louis Petit and Jean-Baptiste Martin (eds.) (Paris: Hubert Welter, 1901-1927, XXII, col. 669. The whole *oratio* of Giles of Viterbo (coll. 669-676) is translated in English by Olin, *Catholic Reform*, pp. 47-60.

⁵⁵ It is published in CT, XII, pp. 67-77.

⁵⁶ “La religione vole che se habiti unius moris in unum, sì come è scritto di primi e veri religiosi che erat illis cor unum et anima una [*Act.* 4, 32]”. “Segua Sua Santità gli boni vestigii delli soi Santissimi predecessori li quali, ispirati da Dio, quando han visto la observantia della vita religiosa collapsa et deformata, sempre han tenuto questa unica et diritta via di riformar: cioè di ridursi et ristrengersi a quelli pochi li quali fossero et ferventi a voler et apti a seguitar la bona vita, et poi con la luce degli esempi di coloro hanno excitato anchora la moltitudine degli altri a far bene et lassando gli altri ordini”. Ibid., pp. 74-75.

⁵⁷ Published *ibid.*, pp. 131-145. English translation in Olin, *Catholic Reform*, pp. 65-79.

⁵⁸ The authorship of this document is discussed in CT, XII, pp. 132-133.

resolved, in the opinion of the 9 cardinals, included the “ordination of priests” [“ordinatio clericorum”] and their frequent “accumulation of ecclesiastical benefices” [“collatio beneficiorum ecclesiasticorum”]; the absence of bishops and cardinals from their dioceses; the choice of principled preachers and confessors, the discipline within monasteries and the care for the subjects taught “in public schools” [“in gymnasiis publicis”].⁵⁹

What emerges from such documents is the basic replication of a durable misunderstanding, which had been shared by many prelates since the first theological disputations with Luther. As will be shown in the following chapter (pp. 43-45), this misunderstanding persisted for centuries in the historiography on the Reformation too. The widespread conviction, which was voiced in 1523 by the Scholastic theologian Johannes Eck (the opponent of Luther and Karlstadt in the famous Leipzig disputation), was that “Luther’s heresy appeared owing to the abuses of the Roman curia, and it spread on account of the clergy’s corrupted customs”.⁶⁰ Yet, precisely after the Leipzig debate, Luther had shifted the focus of his initial criticism, which was originally directed towards indulgences and clerical abuses. As early as 1520, in the dedicatory epistle of his *De libertate christiana* [*On Christian Liberty*], he had explained to Leo X that he attacked the pope and the council “not because of bad customs”, but rather on the grounds of their impious doctrines.⁶¹ One year later, Melancthon himself had explained: “Luther has fought against wicked doctrine and godless dogmas, not against the private vices of priests”.⁶² Throughout his life, Luther would repeatedly confirm this concept and elaborate on it.⁶³ On many occasions, he carefully distinguished between life and doctrine, thus distancing himself from Wyclif and Hus, who had both overlooked such distinction and had criticised misbehaviour. Only by teaching the

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 136-140.

⁶⁰ “Haeresis Ludderi propter abusus Romanae curiae fuit exorta, et propter corruptos mores cleri aucta et propagata”. *Acta reformationis catholicae Ecclesiam Germaniae concernentia saeculi XVI. Die Reformverhandlungen des deutschen Episkopats von 1520 bis 1570*, 6 vols., Georg Pfeilschifter (ed.) (Regensburg: Pustet, 1959-1974), I, p. 119. The quotation comes from a memorandum sent by Eck to pope Adrian VI.

⁶¹ “Communiter quidem in impias doctrinas invectus sum acriter, et adversarios non ob malos mores sed ob impietatem non sequiter momordi”. *Luthers Werke*, WA, *Schriften*, VII, p. 43. Cf. *ibid.*, *Briefwechsel*, II, pp. 323-324: “Neque papam ipsum aut concilium impugnavi propter malam eorum vitam aut operam, sed ob falsam doctrinam, in qua cessant et potestas et obedientiam”.

⁶² “Bellum est Luthero cum prava doctrina, cum impiis dogmatis, non cum privatis sacerdotum viciis”. CR, I, col. 297.

⁶³ See, for example, *Luthers Werke*, WA, *Tischreden*, III, p. 408 (n. 3555, *De papa Antichristo*): “Non moralia [...] et abusus, sed substantiam et doctrinam illius impugnavi”; *ibid.*, *Schriften*, XLVIII, p. 421 (*Tischreden*, n. 624): “Ego nihil de vita mea dico, sed de doctrina, an adversarii recta doceant”.

pure Word of the Gospel, Luther claimed, had it been possible for him to attack impious doctrines and to break the pope's neck.⁶⁴ In Luther's perspective, therefore, moral abuses were merely the effects of a deeper cultural and spiritual crisis. For this reason, he could not think of any way to undertake Church reform other than the preliminary eradication of "canons, decrees, Scholastic theology, philosophy and logic", for the purpose of restoring the "purest studies" of the Bible and the Fathers.⁶⁵

On this ground, Luther's wish paralleled the similar rejection, voiced by many contemporary humanists, of the arid formalism which they regarded as intrinsic to the Scholastic theology. Unlike Luther, however, they laid much more emphasis on "life" as the ultimate dimension and objective of their recovery of a more genuine religiosity, inspired by the Gospel and the Patristic writings. The philological study of the Classics, Scripture and Patristic literature were commendable in so far as they led to the supreme *ars* of good and holy living, for the "good letters" should bring forth virtuous actions.⁶⁶ In the second decade of the XVI century, for example, John Colet (a friend of Pole's first mentor William Latimer) had tried to translate his Neoplatonic and humanist ideas, which permeates his writings, into a strict code of moral virtue that guided his attempted reform at St. Paul's Cathedral.⁶⁷ Lefèvre d'Étaples came to elaborate, instead, a peculiar *theologia vivificans*,⁶⁸ while Erasmus considered the study of the New Testament and the Fathers as leading to his *philosophia Christi*, a notion which he often defined in opposition to the abstractions of scholasticism. In works such as the *Paraclesis, id est adhortatio ad christianae philosophiae studium*

⁶⁴ "Doctrina et vita sunt distinguenda. Vita est mala apud nos sicut apud papistas; non igitur de vita dimicamus et damnamus eos. Hoc nesciverunt Wickleff et Hus, qui vitam impugnarunt. Ich schilte mich nit fromm, sed de verbo, an vere doceant, ibi pugno. Doctrinam invadere ist noch nie geschehen. Ea est mea vocatio. Alii vitam tantum insectati sunt, sed de doctrina agere: das ist der gans an kragen grieffen, nempe quod regnum papistarum et officium est malum. Hoc quando [...] obtinuimus, post facile est dicere et obtinere vitam quoque esse malam. Sed quando manet verbum purum, etiamsi vitae aliquid deest, so kan vita dennoch zu Recht kommen. Es ligt alls in verbo, quod verbum papa sustulit et peperit aliud verbum. Damit hab ich gewonnen und hab sonst nichts gewonnen, nisi quod recte doceo. Quanquam enim etiam civiliter sumus meliores, tamen hoc non est pugnandum; alterum, das bricht dem Papst den Hals". Ibid., *Tischreden*, I, pp. 294-295 (n. 624).

⁶⁵ "Ego simpliciter credo quod impossibile sit Ecclesiam reformari, nisi funditus canones, decretales, scholastica theologia, philosophia, logica, ut nunc habentur, eradicentur, et alia studia instituantur [...] ut rursum Bibliae et S. Patrum purissima studia revocentur". Ibid., *Briefwechsel*, I, p. 170.

⁶⁶ See O'Malley, 'Erasmus and Luther, Continuity and Discontinuity As Key to Their Conflict', in his *Rome and the Renaissance*, pp. 47-65 (49).

⁶⁷ See Jonathan Arnold, *Dean John Colet of St. Paul's. Humanism and Reform in Early Tudor England* (London-New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 1-3. Cf. Jonathan Arnold, 'Colet, Wolsey and the Politics of Reform: St Paul's Cathedral in 1518', *The English Historical Review*, 121 (2006), pp. 979-2001.

⁶⁸ See Eugenio Massa, *Una cristianità nell'alba del Rinascimento. Paolo Giustiniani e il «Libellus ad Leonem X» (1513)* (Genova-Milano: Marietti, 2005), p. 107 and note 7.

[*Exhortation to the Study of Christian Philosophy*] (1516) and the *Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam* [*Theory or Compendious Method of Attaining True Theology*] (1518), he identified Scholastic theology as the primary cause of the withering of piety, which had become a mere set of meaningless ceremonies.⁶⁹ Erasmus represented one of the most significant reference points for the young Pole, who praised the Dutch humanist – in the *De unitate Ecclesiae* – as being “most skilled in the arts, to the extent that nobody in our time has busied himself more with the arts, nor has done so with greater acuteness and diligence”.⁷⁰ In the inventory of Pole’s library, compiled in 1555 by George Lily, Erasmus figured as the most represented author with 9 books, some of which (such as the *Enchiridion* and the *Christiani matrimonii institutio*) had already been condemned by the Index that was issued in 1554 in Milan, Florence and Venice.⁷¹

3. Church Reform and Apocalyptic Expectations

Pole’s first work, *De unitate Ecclesiae* (1535-1536), is not only imbued with the typically humanistic amalgam of “Paul’s spirit and Cicero’s eloquence”,⁷² but assumes also a more restless tone that constantly manifests itself in Pole’s correspondence of the mid-thirties as the expression of an emotional upheaval. The executions of his friends John Fisher and Thomas More, the dramatic decisions he was forced to take and even the reproaches of his family (which would be subsequently exterminated) convinced Pole that his own life was at risk. In a letter to Gasparo Contarini, written from Siena on the 10th October 1536, Pole conveyed the awareness that his enemies, once having failed to persuade him verbally, would move heaven and earth “to do me in” [“ut me e medio tollant”].⁷³ Such a predicament made him particularly

⁶⁹ See *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia emendatiora et auctiora, ad optimas editiones praecipue quas ipse Erasmus postremo curavit summa fide exacta doctorumque virorum notis illustrata*, 10 vols. (Lugduni Batavorum (Leiden): Petrus Vander, 1703-1706; henceforward Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, Leiden), V, cols. 89 ff. and 132 ff.

⁷⁰ “In literis exercitatissimum, quo nemo nostro saeculo plus in literis nec maiori ingenio et industria laboravit”. *Reginaldi Poli, cardinalis britanni, ad Henricum octavum, Britanniae regem, pro ecclesiasticae unitatis defensione libri quatuor* (Roma: Antonio Blado, [1539]; henceforward: Pole, *De unitate*), p. LXIVv.

⁷¹ See Alessandro Pastore, ‘Due biblioteche umanistiche del Cinquecento (i libri del cardinal Pole e di Marcantonio Flaminio)’, *Rinascimento. Rivista dell’Istituto Nazionale di studi sul Rinascimento*, serie II, 19 (1979), pp. 269-290 (272, 279-280, 286, 287).

⁷² “Pauli spiritus et Ciceronis eloquentia”. Pole, *De unitate*, p. LXVIIIr (erroneously numbered as LXVII).

⁷³ Pole, *Epistolae*, I, p. 485.

susceptible to the apocalyptic anxieties that were widespread in Europe between the late XV and the early XVI century. Thus the eschatological perspective became for Pole the interpretative key to a present characterised by uncertainties and conflicts. The opportunity to take part, “on behalf of the English nation”, in Paul III’s commission for Church reform was therefore perceived by Pole as a sign of the divine will, which entrusted him with the rescue of the humiliated Bride of Christ and the reunification of the Christian people. Prophetic images and quotations (mostly of Isaiah) frequently recur in the *De unitate*; Pole often draws on them to evoke the terrible divine punishment that looms over Henry, owing to his acts of cruelty and his *hybris*, which is on a par only with Lucifer’s one.⁷⁴

Nonetheless, it was not only Pole’s personal vicissitudes that determined his involvement in the diffuse apocalyptic expectations. Like many other contemporaries, in fact, Pole mingled eschatological concerns with the aspirations to restore an ideal original and harmonious state of the Church. These palingenetic hopes were to produce powerful symbolic representations of what were deemed to be either the precursors or the agents of Christ’s second advent. The apocalyptic image of the Two Witnesses, for example, was repeatedly evoked in the letters which Pole wrote during the summer of 1536, soon after his appointment as cardinal. According to the prophecy of the Book of Revelation, on the eve of the Day of Judgement the Two Witnesses would carry out their mission on earth before being killed by the Beast of the Abyss and ascending to heaven.⁷⁵ While enjoying the company of his two friends – the abbot Gregorio Cortese and the Benedictine monk Marco of Cremona – Pole had the impression he was strolling in heaven between Enoch and Eliah.⁷⁶

In some of the apocalyptic prophecies that achieved popularity in the first half of the XVI century, the symbolic depiction of the eschatological role of the papacy proved to be the linchpin of the two temporal dimensions (backward-looking, towards the origins of the Church, and forward-looking, towards the Last Day) that coexisted within the ideal of reform.

⁷⁴ See Pole, *De unitate*, p. XXVIIIr.

⁷⁵ See *Apc.* 11, 3-13. On the importance of this theme in the Protestant world, see Rodney L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: the Theme of “Two Witnesses” in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), especially pp. 8-12 for the different interpretations of the figures of the Two Witnesses.

⁷⁶ See Pole, *Epistolae*, I, pp. 461: “Quando cum his sum, animo prorsus in paradiso Dei cum Enoch et Helia ambulare videar: tanta est horum innocentia et bonitas” (Pole to Priuli, 23rd July 1536). P. 475: “Pridie quam pontificis diploma acciperem, fuit mecum hic abbas noster [Cortese], quo cum biduum suavissime consumpsi, cum adesset Marcus noster monachus (et idem titulo tenus abbas), qui mecum assidue fuit, et nunc est atque erit. Quamdiu in hoc loco versabor, quem nosti quam amoenus sit, sed tamen maxime amoenus quando, duobus his comitatus, hortos perambularem, qui me sic suo sermone pascebant ut cum Enoch prorsus et Helia ambulare mihi visus sum in paradiso Dei” (Pole to Contarini, 3rd August 1536).

Furthermore, the diametrically opposite images of the pope as Antichrist or *pastor angelicus* can be seen as reproducing the parallel process of differentiation between the two distinct conceptions of reformation described in the previous paragraph. It is not by chance, indeed, that the identification of the pope with Antichrist played a crucial role in Luther's shift from a simple criticism of clerical abuses to the outright rejection of the spiritual and theological authority of the papacy.⁷⁷ The connection between the pope and Antichrist became immensely popular especially after the publication of Lucas Cranach's *Passional Christi und Antichristi* (1521). In this pamphlet, thirteen couples of drawings – representing Christ and the Pope as Good and Evil – contrast the purity of the original evangelical spirit with the wretchedness of the papal institution, which is associated with the Whore of Babylon and Antichrist. The evangelical image of foot washing, for instance, is opposed to the kissing of the pope's foot; the temporal power of the pope contrasts sharply with Christ's refusal of the crown; and Jesus's ascension has its opposite in the damnation of the pope, who falls to the hell with the apocalyptic Beast.⁷⁸

The legend of the Angelic Pope, instead, dates back to the XIII century and is somehow related to Joachim of Fiore's theory of the three ages. This apocalyptic figure had often been interpreted as a possible agent for the ultimate religious reform of the Christendom before the coming of the Antichrist. Thus the image of the *pastor angelicus* had often provided inspiration for late medieval books of prophecies, such as the pseudo-Joachimite *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* and the *Book of Fiore*, which circulated soon after 1300.⁷⁹ On numerous occasions, especially during the first half of the XVI century, various popes were consequently reputed to be the *pastor angelicus* of the prophecies. This was the case for Leo X and Adrian VI, but there is evidence that Pole as well, together with his circle of friends at Viterbo, fell under the spell of this myth. The epithet of *cardinalis anglicus* lent itself well to the pun *cardinalis angElicus*, and before the conclave of 1549-1550, when Pole missed being elected pope for one vote, many people at all social levels were ready to hail him as the

⁷⁷ On the relation between Protestantism and apocalypticism, see Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1-91; John R. Hall, *Apocalypse. From Antiquity to the Empire of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), pp. 79-118.

⁷⁸ *Passional Christi und Antichristi* [Wittenberg: Johann Rhau-Grunenberg, 1521], pp. [A3v]-[A4r], [C3v]-[C4r], [D1v]-[D2r].

⁷⁹ See Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (eds.), *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, 3 vols. (New York: Continuum, 1999), II, p. 81; Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (eds.), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 289.

Angelic Pope that would finally accomplish the reform of the Church and the reunification of Christendom. Some witnesses of later Inquisition trials, during the fifties and sixties of the XVI century, confirmed the fact that, “according to common knowledge” [“ex communi fama”], Pole was reputed to be “the leader of a certain school [group] which the followers of the cardinal himself called angelic”.⁸⁰

The frequent parallelisms between Pole’s writings on the papal office (*De summo pontefice*) and on the reformation of the Church (*De reformatione Ecclesiae*) reveal that also his conceptions of reform and of the role of the papacy tended to become increasingly intertwined within a more and more evident contemplative framework. As a consequence, argumentation was progressively overwhelmed by the communication of a vivid religious experience.⁸¹ Far from outlining a precise and detailed agenda for reform, Pole enshrouded it with an enraptured attitude that expressed itself through images of illumination and peace (which derive from his Valdesian experiences). This brings us back to the initial dilemma about the contents of reform, and in particular of Pole’s idea of reform. It is precisely in his conception – as I have hypothesised – that lies one of the decisive reasons for the expectations he aroused and for the appearance of his myth, whose developments in the subsequent biographical production will be the subject of the following chapter. I incline to think that Pole’s constant aspiration towards ecclesiastical unity, which he clearly voiced as early as in his first work, was reflected in his reluctance to choose between either of the models of reform that were rapidly taking shape and becoming mutually exclusive. The perception that this process was putting at stake the integrity of the Christendom induced Pole to walk a tightrope, trying to defer as long as possible the choice, which was increasingly pressing, between these antithetical models. By drawing on his considerable fund of knowledge about the diverse experiments of reform he had come across, he was able to maintain a certain room for manoeuvre. It is no surprise that the more abstract his programme for reform remained, the more chances it had of appealing to a wide variety of people, although it was this very feature that condemned it to failure when Pole tried to implement it at the Council of Trent.

⁸⁰ “Caput cuiusdam scholae quam ipsius cardinalis sequaces appellabant angelicam”. Deposition of Gabriel Martenet; Rome, 12 October 1557. Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone. Nuova edizione critica*, con la collaborazione di Luca Addante e Guido Mongini, 3 vols. (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011-2014; henceforward *Processo Morone*, NE), I, p. 591. According to the inquisitors, such a “schola” constituted “sectam quorundam infectorum et suspectorum de haeresi”. Ibid., p. 589.

⁸¹ See Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 181.

CHAPTER II

“Englishman Italianate, Devil Incarnate”: The Development of Pole’s Biographical Myth

1.1. *Pole’s Myth Between Biography and Historiography*

Before being an object of historical investigation, the life of Reginald Pole has often been a source of controversies that, far from affecting only his personal vicissitudes, pertain to the events in which he played a leading role. For centuries, writing about Pole has primarily meant, therefore, to deal with and to debate on some decisive episodes of the mid-XVI century European history, which also proved to be turning points in Pole’s life and ecclesiastical career. The first of these coincided with Henry VIII’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon and the consequent schism of the Church of England from the Roman Church. Pole’s opposition to his cousin’s plans forced him to leave England (where he was by then considered as “open enemy”)¹ and to stay for more than two decades in Italy. His move inaugurated the second important phase of his life, when new unpredicted changes occurred: not only did he become involved in the intellectual and religious ferment that was widespread in Italy, but reached the highest ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchies. Soon after being appointed cardinal in 1536 by pope Paul III, he took part in the first commission for the reform of the Church. In the following years, he went so far as to be nominated to preside over the initial sessions of the Council of Trent and even came close to ascending the papal throne in the conclave of 1549-1550. His last diplomatic assignment in Mary Tudor’s England, where he was responsible for the restoration of Catholicism, constituted the third and final stage of his life. This period saw the incipient emergence of the antithetical judgements that would dominate the whole historiography on cardinal Pole. By that time, he had apparently succeeded in disappointing almost everyone: to the Protestants, he appeared as

¹ The definition of “open enemy” is drawn from a letter by Thomas Starkey to Reginald Pole, presumably dating from the summer of 1536. It is published in John Strype (ed.), *Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of It, and the Emergencies of the Church of England Under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI and Queen Mary I, with Large Appendixes Containing Original Papers, Records Etc.*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1822), I/2, pp. 282-295 (p. 294).

a cruel papist who persecuted the followers of the true faith; in Rome, on the contrary, he had started to draw growing suspicions about his doctrinal beliefs.

This difference of opinions was certainly fostered by Pole's obstinate elusiveness, which became embodied in what the Italian historian Paolo Simoncelli has defined as Pole's "myth of sanctity".² Initially fashioned as a self-portrait by Pole himself in his own writings, this image was then refined and widely disseminated by his first biographers, thus becoming a leitmotiv – either in the form of a positive stereotype or as a polemic target – of the flow of biographies and historiographical essays that have been written from Pole's death until the present day. As early as 1835, the English officer Edmund Lodge (1756-1839) was aware that such a peculiar representation had acted as a deceptive screen for those who met Pole during his lifetime or dealt with him in their works: "In his own time more admired than understood" – Lodge stated in the opening paragraph of his short biography of Pole – "it is rather his character than his history that has been transmitted to posterity".³ As a consequence, the permanence of Reginald Pole's "myth of sanctity" has contributed to bolstering the polarisation of the assessments expressed by ensuing advocates or detractors of the English cardinal.

In the first part of this chapter, I will examine how this image of sanctity was given its definitive shape by the first two biographers of Pole, Ludovico Beccadelli and András Dudith Sbardellati, who had retained close and friendly relations with the English cardinal during different periods of his life. Their works were conceived as primary elements of a wider enterprise by Pole's former friends and colleagues, among whom cardinal Giovanni Morone played a key part. During the pontificate of Paul IV (Gian Pietro Carafa), most of these people had been tried and sentenced by the Inquisition. When Paul IV died, they undertook the publication of Pole's writings and of his apologetic biography in order to quieten the past suspicions, both on Pole's and on their own doctrinal beliefs, and to provide a stable basis for their rehabilitation.

² See Paolo Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole. Eresia e santità nelle polemiche religiose del Cinquecento* (Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1977).

³ Edmund Lodge, *Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain. Engraved from Authentic Pictures in the Galleries of the Nobility and the Public Collections of the Country. With Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Their Lives and Actions*, 12 vols. (London: Harding and Lepard, 1835), II, p. 1 (*Cardinal Pole*).

Religious convictions and national belonging represented, instead, the two fundamental factors that mostly influenced the biographical production on Reginald Pole between the XVII and the XIX century, which will be discussed in the second part. Whereas the opposition between Catholic and Protestant historiography set the framework of the debate by supplying authors with powerful polemical motives, the different origins of these writers steered the selection of events and the structure of biographies. On one side, the few Italian scholars who dealt with Pole during these centuries paid little attention to his last years in England; on the other side, English authors mainly concentrated on this precise period, overlooking Pole's long stay in Italy and his activity in Trent. In his *Review of Mr. Phillips's History of the Life of Reginald Pole* (written in defence of the Church of England and against the apologetic interpretation of Pole's life offered by Thomas Phillips), Gloucester Ridley complained that Pole's achievements in Italy were hardly known in England, while the Italians disregarded the "ingratitude, resentment and treason" he had shown towards his cousin Henry VIII.⁴ As a matter of fact, after Ludovico Beccadelli's work and until the late XIX century, the biographies of Pole – with the only exception of the one by cardinal Querini⁵ – were always written in England, where the echo of the religious tensions of Mary Tudor's reign had never dissolved.

In the third part I will analyse the XX-century reorientation of Pole's biographies towards the contemporary historiographical debates on the role of the Council of Trent within the European religious crisis of the XVI century. Under the considerable influence of Hubert Jedin's studies, historians have turned their attention to the significance of Pole's experience as a cardinal for the process of Church reformation. Religious controversies over the figure of Pole thus gave way to a more critical debate over the part he played in the response of the Catholic Church to the Protestant defiance. The different appraisal of his religious trajectory has led to contrasting accounts of the diverse stances that emerged within the Roman Church on the eve and during the Council of Trent. In this respect, I will linger over two distinct

⁴ "That milder merit of the heart, which distinguished him [Pole] among his favourites at Padua, is lost to us amidst that most illiberal abuse, with which he foams against his king and benefactor: the appearance of humanity and disinterestedness, which he put on at Rome, drop off when we look at him travelling from court to court to rouse up the princes of Europe to invade his country". Gloucester Ridley, *A Review of Mr. Phillips's History of the Life of Reginald Pole* (London: J. Whiston, B. White and J. Dodsley, 1766), p. 5.

⁵ Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini wrote a biographical outline of Pole as an appendix to the edition of his correspondence (Pole, *Epistolae*).

historiographical approaches to the matter of the Council of Trent within early modern Catholicism. During the second half of the XX century, the sharp boundaries between these two schools – which I termed the classic institutional and the socio-cultural tradition – almost exactly coincided with national borders, for the institutional approach was mainly pursued in Germany and Italy, while the socio-cultural approach was developed and followed in France, with few exceptions in England. From the last decade of the XX century, the loosening of the boundaries between the two historiographical traditions has fostered new conceptualisations, which will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

1.2. *The Aftermath of Pole's Death: the First Biographies As a Means of Collective Rehabilitation*

The collective endeavour that produced the first biographies of Pole started immediately after Pole's death, in the climate of suspicions and fear that characterised the pontificate of Paul IV. Whereas the support Pole had received from Mary Tudor and Philip II had been enough to prevent the pope from terminating his diplomatic mission, only death spared the English cardinal the probable heresy proceedings which Paul IV was trying to institute against him in Rome. Carafa had already successfully done so to the detriment of Pole's friend, cardinal Giovanni Morone, who had not managed to avoid a long Inquisition trial. A few months later, in some letters to the noblewoman Giulia Gonzaga, the former apostolic prothonotary Pietro Carnesecchi wrote that, had not Pole joined the queen in death, he would be forced to join his friend Morone in jail,⁶ for Pole had unhappily passed away being considered "a Lutheran in Rome and a papist in Germany".⁷

The successor of Paul IV, pope Pius IV Medici (elected in 1559) seemed to give a new direction to the papal policy by abandoning the inquisitorial fanaticism of Gian Pietro Carafa. A fellow citizen and life-long friend of Giovanni Morone, the new pontiff solicited a quick

⁶ "Non havesse fatto compagnia a la regina nella morte, saria stato forzato a farla a Morone nel Castello [Castel Sant'Angelo] o pregione". Letter written from Venice on the 17th December 1558. Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557-1567). Edizione critica*, 2 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1998-2000; henceforward *Processi Carnesecchi*), II/2, p. 412.

⁷ "In opinione a Roma di luterano et in Alemagna di papista". The letter was written from Venice on the 13th February 1559. Ibid., p. 492.

conclusion of the trial of cardinal Morone, who was absolved. Other friends of Pole who were still alive (such as the commissioner at the Council Giovanni Tommaso Sanfelice, the successor of Morone in the diocese of Modena, Egidio Foscarari, and Pietro Carnesecchi himself) were cleared of previous charges. Nonetheless, the truce offered by pope Pius IV did not deceive the remaining part of the *spirituali*, the group of prelates, intellectuals, aristocrats and officers (many of whom had been disciples of the Spanish exile Juan de Valdés) that in the early forties had shared with Pole a peculiar religious experience. They were well aware that their previous relations with Pole could constitute again a subject of investigation for the Inquisition. Cardinal Morone, in particular, was in an awkward position. During the trial of the Spanish Inquisition against the archbishop of Toledo Bartolomé Carranza, for example, new revelations had surfaced to his detriment: a document written by the cardinal of Burgos Francisco de Mendoza y Bobadilla had brought again some of the old charges against Morone, whose name appeared together with those of Reginald Pole and cardinal Gasparo Contarini⁸. Furthermore, Morone still had treacherous enemies among the cardinals who had been faithful to pope Paul IV. The most prominent of them was Michele Ghislieri, the austere Dominican whose career had entirely unfolded within the Holy Office and under the protection of Gian Pietro Carafa. The latter had rewarded Ghislieri by appointing him cardinal and entrusting to him the trial against Morone.⁹ The temporary truce of Pius IV's pontificate, therefore, induced cardinal Morone to take advantage of the favourable situation in order to strengthen his rehabilitation and protect himself from further attacks by his opponents in the Sacred College. It is in this circumstance that he envisaged publishing some of the writings of Reginald Pole, thus reinforcing his stereotyped image of sanctity. By piecing together the contradictory and ambiguous features of the English cardinal, Morone aimed at framing Pole's thought and doings within the emerging doctrinal boundaries that were being more precisely defined in these years by the Catholic Church. Through this publishing enterprise, Morone hoped to remove the past suspicions both on Pole and, indirectly, on himself as well, because of the well-known bonds between them.¹⁰

⁸ See Massimo Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma. Studi sul cardinal Giovanni Morone (1509-1580) e il suo processo d'eresia* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2005), pp. 336-337.

⁹ On Michele Ghislieri, see *ibid.*, pp. 51, 480-485. See also Maurilio Guasco and Angelo Torre (eds.), *Pio V nella società e nella politica del suo tempo* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2005).

¹⁰ On the reasons that induced Morone to launch this publishing enterprise, as well as on his awkward position after the Inquisition trial, see Elena Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi: la definizione dei poteri nella Chiesa*

For similar reasons, other friends of Pole among the *spirituali* got involved in the same endeavour, which also included the publication of Pole's first biography as a fundamental component of the project. This work was written by Ludovico Beccadelli (archbishop of Dubrovnik from 1555 to 1564) between September and December 1561, on the eve of the last session of the Council of Trent.¹¹ Three years before, Beccadelli had already composed the *Lives* of Pietro Bembo and Gasparo Contarini, the two cardinals whose patronage he had enjoyed for a long part of his career. As a secretary of cardinal Contarini (from 1535 until Contarini's death in 1542), he had kept up a frequent correspondence with Pole (as well as with his friend Alvise Priuli), whom he also accompanied on the occasion of some diplomatic missions in France and the Low Countries. In writing his biography of Pole, Beccadelli was assisted by the bishop of Saint Asaph, Thomas Goldwell, who provided him with information about the last years of Pole in the English reign.¹² When the work was completed, Beccadelli sent it to Giovanni Morone; the cardinal gave his approval¹³ and consented to translate it into Latin in order to publish it as a preface to the edition of Pole's writings,¹⁴ some of which were listed in the last pages of the biography.¹⁵

It was the then bishop of Knin in Dalmatia, András Dudith Sbardellati, who volunteered to translate the *Vita del cardinale Reginaldo Polo* [*Life of the Cardinal Reginald Pole*] into Latin. In the early fifties he had met Pole in Italy and followed him during his last diplomatic mission in England. After Pole's death, he took part in the Council of Trent, first as bishop of Knin (from 1560) and subsequently (1562) as bishop of Csanád and Pécs, which were at that time under Turk domination. In 1565, as ambassador of the emperor Maximilian II, he went to Poland, where he decided shortly after to abandon the Roman Church and to get married. In the last years of his life, he came into contact with the Italian religious exiles and embraced

postridentina (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2007), in particular pp. 76-79, 188.

¹¹ The biography of Pole by Ludovico Beccadelli is published in Giambattista Morandi (ed.), *Monumenti di varia letteratura tratti dai manoscritti di monsignor Lodovico Beccadelli arcivescovo di Ragusa*, 2 vols. (in Bologna: nell'Istituto delle scienze, 1797-1804), I/2, pp. 277-333.

¹² See Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della cristianità* (Firenze: Olschki, 1988), pp. 331-332.

¹³ Morone declared that he had been delighted to read the biography, "sì per esser ben posta et con quelli ornamenti che si ricercano, sì per ridurmi a memoria di quelle cose che per la dottrina, et bontà sua [of Pole], et amicizia nostra mi diletano infinitamente". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 334.

¹⁴ In the letter that accompanied his biography, Beccadelli wrote to Morone: "Non ho atteso a pulirla con lima toscana perché vorrei, per poterla accompagnare con l'opre sue, se così però piacerà a Vostra Signoria illustrissima, che fusse fatta latina". Quoted in Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 272.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

antitrinitarian doctrines.¹⁶ His Latin version of Beccadelli's work integrated the catalogue of Pole's books with other titles,¹⁷ which Dudith had managed to see between 1555 and 1556, when he was in England with Pole. Dudith also introduced several meaningful additions or cuts that made his translation substantially different from Beccadelli's biography. The tone of the Latin version is less hagiographic, as well as markedly polemical against the intransigent curial wing, namely in the person of Gian Pietro Carafa. This notwithstanding, Beccadelli approved the changes and consented to Dudith's request for having it published.¹⁸ He even showed himself proud of having contributed with "considerable diligence" ["molta opera"] to the enterprise.¹⁹ While some cardinals too (Girolamo Seripando and Stanislaus Hosius) encouraged Dudith to publish his Latin biography,²⁰ probably Morone did not manage to read it before it was published in Venice in 1563. In the light of Morone's prudence in the final phase of the Council, one can assume that he would not approved it if he had been able to ascertain to what extent Dudith had altered the original biography, which Morone had warmly praised.²¹ Beccadelli's work, instead, was not published until the end of the XVIII century.

2. XVII-XIX Centuries: Pole's Life As an Object of Controversy

The long silence of the Italian Catholic historiography on Reginald Pole after the conclusion of the Council of Trent is related, in many respects, to the rapid weakening of the Inquisition's interest in the doctrinal beliefs of the English cardinal. The post-Tridentine

¹⁶ The only significant study on Dudith still remains Pierre Costil, *André Dudith humaniste hongrois, 1533-1589: sa vie, son oeuvre et ses manuscrits grecs* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1935). See also *Dudith András könyvtára. Részleges rekonstrukció. Összeállította és az előszót írta Jankovics József, Monok István* (András Dudith's Library. A Partial Reconstruction. Compiled and with an Introduction by József Jankovics; Szeged: Scriptum KFT., 1993). In recent years, the complete edition of Dudith's correspondence has been published: Andreas Dudithius, *Epistolae*, editae curantibus Lecho Szczucki et Tiburtio Szepessy (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1992-). See *ibid.*, I, pp. 13-17, for a short biographical sketch of Dudith.

¹⁷ Cf. the catalogue of Pole's writings in Beccadelli's biography (Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 331-332) and in Dudith's one, published in Pole, *Epistolae*, pp. 1-65 (62-63).

¹⁸ See Dudith's letter to Beccadelli (Trent, 14th October 1562) in Dudithius, *Epistolae*, I, p. 122-123 (also in Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 272-273), and Beccadelli's answer (Bologna, 24th October 1562), *ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

¹⁹ Quoted in Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 356.

²⁰ Dudith himself admitted it in a letter to Paolo Manuzio (Trent, 24th October 1562), Dudithius, *Epistolae*, I, pp. 124-127.

²¹ See Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 357.

generations of Italian historiographers were not very willing to uncover again this question, which bore the traces of the bitter conflicts within the Roman curia during the years of the Council. The shadows of the past divisions threatened to impair the reassuring monolithic image of historical continuity that was to be revived in the XVIII-century works of cardinal Angelo Maria Querini and the canon Giambattista Morandi. It is not by chance that the latter chose to publish Pole's apologetic biography written by Ludovico Beccadelli, with the aim of establishing solid documentary evidence for the representation of Pole as a pious man and the attenuation of his (as well as Morone's) troubles with the Inquisition. The same purpose inspired cardinal Querini's monumental collection of Pole's correspondence, which marked the greatest milestone in the scholarship on Pole before the XX century. A Cassinese Benedictine (the congregation whose protector had been Pole), Querini was a Vatican librarian and founder of the imposing Biblioteca Queriniana in his hometown Brescia.²² His five volumes were intended for defending Pole from the denigration of the Lutheran theologian Johann Georg Schelhorn, who had also insinuated that Pole had been a Protestant. Apart from publishing two letters of Schelhorn,²³ Querini also added to his volumes some long polemical appendixes that constitute an extensive biography of the English cardinal. His collection of letters, however, is sometimes affected by deliberate expurgation or amelioration and by the mistakes of his main copyist, the Belgian abbot Schanat, whose incompetence became clear to him too late.²⁴ Even pope Benedict XIV criticised the ineptitude of Querini himself and tried to have his publications banned by the Inquisition.²⁵

Despite his display of erudition and the declared intention to produce an accurate account of Pole's life on the basis of new sources, Querini did not distance himself from the hagiographic representation of Pole in Beccadelli's biography. In XVIII-century works, indeed, the emphasis on the acquisition of sources acted as a prop of the polemical motivations that lay at the heart of subsequent biographies. Thus, the figure of Reginald Pole continued to be presented as an example either of virtue or of sin. In the latter case, the model

²² See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 370.

²³ Pole, *Epistolae*, I, pp. II-LXXX, I-XXIV. On the correspondence between Querini and Schelhorn, see Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole*, p. 234 ff.

²⁴ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 371 and, of the same author, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, 5 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002-2008), I, pp. 2-3.

²⁵ The pope wrote in a letter: "Il suo mestiere [of Querini] è di far note ai libri degli altri, per esempio alle lettere di cardinal Polo, ma non è in grado di comporre da sé, non avendo fondamento di sapere ed essendo affatto senza logica". Quoted in Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 371, note 84.

remained the one established by Matthew Parker (the successor of Pole as archbishop of Canterbury), who drew upon Henrician polemic against Pole to describe him as “Englishman Italianate, devil incarnate”.²⁶ Parker’s account contributed to delineating a standardised plot that would regularly recur in English Protestant historiography.²⁷ The fixed set of events that were part of this plot included Pole’s opposition to Henry VIII, the writing of *De unitate*, his diplomatic mission of 1537 (seen as a treacherous act against king Henry and his homeland) and the restoration of Catholicism in England, while Pole’s activity in Trent was hardly mentioned.²⁸ Querini’s work, instead, was the principal source of inspiration (if not plagiarism) for the English canon Thomas Phillips, who published a two-volume biography of Pole between 1764 and 1765.²⁹ Phillips was the grand-nephew of William Joyner (alias Lyde), the author of the first English book entirely devoted to cardinal Pole (1686),³⁰ and both of them had been Jesuits. Like his predecessor, Thomas Phillips aimed at defending Pole and the Catholic Church. He intended to do so through a narrative that, according to his declarations, would adhere rigorously to facts. Phillips’s rhetorical claim of objectivity, however, could not hide his profound debt to the hagiographic model established by Beccadelli and Dudith and revived by Angelo Maria Querini; his biography, therefore, induced some of his critics to write three polemical works that were all published in the following year (1766).³¹

The XIX-century historiography saw the marked prevalence of Pole’s apologists, who reiterated the traditional patterns of previous hagiographies. Two books, in particular, deserve to be mentioned. The first one, published by Frederick George Lee in 1888, is an interesting exception to the customary connection between the religious beliefs and the origins of the author, on one side, and the selection of events, as well as the structure of the biography, on the other side. Whereas, as was pointed out earlier, Protestant authors always tended to

²⁶ “Inglese italianato, diavolo incarnato”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 364.

²⁷ The definition “English Protestant” is used here deliberately to emphasise the fact that within the Anglican Church, despite the acknowledgement of obvious peculiarities, there was a diffuse perception of belonging to the world of the European Reformed Churches. Furthermore, the theological bases accepted by the Church of England were largely taken from other reformed European churches. See the discussion of Marshall, ‘(Re)defining the English Reformation’, pp. 578-579.

²⁸ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 366.

²⁹ Thomas Phillips, *The History of the Life of Reginald Pole*, 2 vols. (Oxford: William Jackson, 1764-1765).

³⁰ William Joyner, *Some Observations upon the Life of Reginaldus Polus Cardinal of the Royal Blood of England* (London: Matthew Turner, 1686).

³¹ One of them was the aforementioned Gloucester Ridley; the other two were Timothy Neve, *Animadversions upon Mr. Phillips's History of the Life of Cardinal Pole* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1766); Edward Stone, *Remarks upon the History of the Life of Reginald Pole* (Oxford: W. Jackson, 1766).

disregard Pole's Italian stay and his activity in Trent, Frederick G. Lee is a unique example of Anglo-Catholic writer who thoroughly omits this phase: his biography describes Pole's career up to 1539 and resumes it from Mary Tudor's reign and the restoration of Catholicism,³² for the purpose of making evident the continuity of Pole's legatine missions of 1537 and 1554. Through this work, which was dedicated to the archbishops of Canterbury and Westminster, Lee hoped to promote the reconciliation of the Churches of England and Rome.³³ The second book is one of the very few ever written on Pole by a woman. The author was Marie Hallé (whose pseudonym was Martin Haile), the daughter of a German concert pianist and conductor and a lady from Louisiana.³⁴ Despite her use of a very wide range of sources, Marie Hallé did not succeed in enriching or qualifying the conventional apologetic and hyperbolic representation of Pole, who is depicted as "the greatest Englishman of his time":³⁵

Learned, simple-minded, pious, endowed with intellectual gifts of the highest order, wise and prudent in counsel, ardently zealous, and yet patient and long-suffering in the extreme, and with a rectitude of mind as true to its conscience as the needle to the pole [...]. He was endeared to his contemporaries by qualities that have left a memory and fragrance which time does not stale, but carries from age to age.³⁶

3.1. *The XX Century: Reginald Pole and Jedin's Binomial Catholic Reformation/Counter-Reformation*

In the XX century, the decisive sway exerted by Hubert Jedin's works has reoriented the historiographical literature on Reginald Pole towards his Italian sojourn and his involvement in the process of Church reformation. In Jedin's wake, historians have acknowledged this question as a central issue that links Pole's biography to the crucial developments of the

³² See Frederick George Lee, *Reginald Pole, Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury. An Historical Sketch, with an Introductory Prologue and Practical Epilogue* (New York-London: G. P. Putnam's Sons-John C. Nimmo, 1888).

³³ See the *Prologue*, *ibid.*, pp. xi-xxxviii, and *Corporate Reunion: a Practical Epilogue*, pp. 263-303.

³⁴ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 381-382, note 119.

³⁵ Martin Haile, *Life of Reginald Pole* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1910), p. 2.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

European religious crisis of the mid-XVI century. The German historian Wilhelm Schenk, for example, was the first scholar to consider Pole's manuscript of *De reformatione Ecclesiae*.³⁷ No longer regarded as a typified example that was to be embedded in either the Protestant or the Catholic field, the figure of Pole has increasingly been studied as a key point of access that allows an assessment of the diverse stances within the Roman ecclesiastical institution on the eve and during the Council of Trent.

The shift in the thrust of the biographical production on Pole thus mirrored the similar transformation in the historiography on the Council of Trent. From the late XIX century, the previous inherent dependence of these biographies on religious controversies gradually tended to turn into a closer association with contemporary historiographical debates. The opening of the Vatican Secret Archives in 1881 marked the beginning of a more critical phase, whose ideal culmination was Jedin's imposing four-volume *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient* [*History of the Council of Trent*], published between 1949 and 1957.³⁸ This work, as well as the important theoretical article that preceded it (*Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation?*),³⁹ set a conceptual pattern that was to remain an inescapable reference point during the second half of the XX century. Many subsequent historians have proved indebted to Jedin's *Geschichte*, which still constitutes the standard account of the Council of Trent. Even the staunchest critics of his interpretations have often merely shifted the emphasis on the role played by one rather than another religious institution among those which Jedin pinpointed as the driving forces of the reform process.

If Jedin's categories and periodisation have decisively fostered, in many cases, the entrenchment of the terms of the question, the most significant influence of the German historian can be detected in the very institutional approach of his studies. As a consequence, ecclesiastical structures, popes and high-ranking prelates have continued to represent the major focus of ensuing historical analyses, especially in Italy, the country where the young Catholic priest Jedin had sojourned during the late twenties (to prepare his biography of

³⁷ See Wilhelm Schenk, *Reginald Pole, Cardinal of England* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1950), pp. 97-98.

³⁸ Hubert Jedin, *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient*, 4 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1949-1957).

³⁹ Hubert Jedin, *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation? Ein Versuch zur Klärung der Begriffe nebst einer Jubiläumsbetrachtung über das Trienter Konzil* (Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1946). English translation: 'Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation?', in David Martin Luebke (ed.), *The Counter-Reformation* (Malden [MA, USA]-Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 21-45.

cardinal Girolamo Seripando) and in the early thirties. As a son of Jewish lady converted to Catholicism (and despite his initial sympathy with Hitler's defence of German necessities against the punitive conditions of the Treaty of Versailles), Jedin had to interrupt his teaching career in Germany after the rise to power of the Nazi party. Shortly after the outbreak of the Second World War he fled to Rome; there he managed to proceed with his research and contributed to the founding of the *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*. His contacts with Italy, as well as his frequent travels to Rome, continued after 1949, when he could finally obtain a chair in history of the Church at the Catholic theological Faculty of Bonn.⁴⁰ It comes as no surprise that Italy is the country where Jedin's works (in particular his 1946 theoretical essay) instantly had a significant impact, while elsewhere in Europe it passed at first almost unnoticed.

3.2. The French Socio-Cultural Approach to "Early Modern Catholicism" and the Reformation

Jedin, for his part, ignored different approaches and conceptualisations that were slowly emerging in French historiography during the fourth decade of the century. To a certain extent, his attitude was based on a slight aversion for French culture as well as for Adenauer's rapprochement with France.⁴¹ By the middle of the XX century, two distinct historiographical approaches to the matter of the Council of Trent within the XVI-century European religious crisis and "Early Modern Catholicism"⁴² had eventually taken shape. On the one hand, most Italian historians kept on favouring the institutional dimension of this matter, which they placed in the traditional framework of church history. On the other hand, some French scholars (both lay and Catholics) began to shift the paradigm where the Council of Trent had usually been located, thus turning their attention from the "legal religion" ["*religion légale*"] to the "lived religion" ["*religion vécue*"], as Gabriel Le Bras put it later on, just before his

⁴⁰ See John W. O'Malley, *Trent and All That. Renaming Catholicism in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge [MA, USA]-London: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. 46-49.

⁴¹ See Alain Tallon, *La France et le concile de Trente (1518-1563)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1997), pp. 13-15.

⁴² This is the broad definition proposed by John O'Malley. See O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, pp. 119-143.

death.⁴³ By laying stress on the distinction between ecclesiastical prescriptions and inner life of the believers, Gabriel Le Bras (a Catholic jurist and medievalist who had been a colleague of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre at Strasbourg during the twenties) aimed at launching a “new sociology of religions” [“nouvelle sociologie des religions”]. He maintained that the “old sociology of religions” [“ancienne sociologie des religions”], that is to say the classic sociology of Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, deserved credit for characterising “religion as a social fact”.⁴⁴ Laws were conceived by Le Bras as fundamental means of human interaction and expression of diverse mentalities; accordingly, his purpose was to examine “the social origin of rules and the effect of rules on society”.⁴⁵ The features of this new approach to religious history were outlined by the end of World War II in his *Introduction à l'histoire de la pratique religieuse en France* [Introduction to the History of Religious Practice in France].⁴⁶ Le Bras's project of a statistical and quantitative socio-historical study of French Catholicism intersected with the multidisciplinary endeavour of the *Annales* school, in that they shared the ideal of shaping a *histoire totale* through the interplay between history, economics, geography and, above all, sociology. Unlike Bloch and Febvre (with whom Le Bras always maintained friendly relations), it was Le Bras himself who had an immediate impact on French historiography, which has ever since favoured a close dialogue with sociology while remaining faithful to constant methodological reflections.

In the long term, however, Lucien Febvre's famous article *Une question mal posée: les origines de la Réforme française et le problème des causes de la Réforme* [A Badly-Put Question: the Origins of the French Reformation and the Problem of the Causes of the Reformation] (1929)⁴⁷ was to become one of the most influential essays in so far as it steered Reformation and Counter-Reformation studies towards new directions. Febvre's thesis was twofold. In the first place, he reacted against rival national historiographic schools that, on the

⁴³ Henri Desroche and Gabriel Le Bras, ‘Religion légale et religion vécue’, *Archives des sciences sociales des religions*, 29 (1970), pp. 15-20.

⁴⁴ “[Montrer] dans la religion un fait social”. Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁵ “L’origine sociale des règles et l’effet des règles sur la société”. Quoted in O’Malley, *Trent and All That*, p. 201, note 28; cf. p. 100.

⁴⁶ Gabriel Le Bras, *Introduction à l'histoire de la pratique religieuse en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1942-1945).

⁴⁷ Lucien Febvre, ‘Une question mal posée: les origines de la Réforme française et le problème des causes de la Réforme’, *La Revue Historique*, 159 (1929), pp. 1-73 (reprinted in Febvre, *Au coeur religieux du XVI^e siècle*, Paris: SEVPEN, 1957. I will quote from the second edition of this book: Paris, SEVPEN, 1968).

basis of the alleged equivalence between the Reformation and the beginning of the modern age, engaged in a quest for the figures who deserved the honour to be the initiators of the Reformation and, therefore, of the modern era. Whereas in Germany there was no doubt on who was such a figure, in France, for instance, this primacy had been usually assigned to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. In the second place, Febvre criticised the widespread simplistic assumption that the Reformation was the result of clerical abuses, which were identified as the very cause of the Reformation itself.⁴⁸ According to Febvre, instead, “the Reformation has been the sign and the work of a profound revolution in religious sentiment” [“la Réforme a été le signe et l'œuvre d'une révolution profonde du sentiment religieux”].⁴⁹

Providing XVI-century people with what they wished for, some of them confusedly, others with absolute clarity: a religion better adapted to their new necessities, better harmonised with the changed conditions of their social existence; this is what the Reformation finally attained [...]. What characterises it, essentially, is to have been able to find – for the troubled conscience of a fair chunk of Christendom – is to have been able to offer the people who seemed to have awaited it for years, and who would adopt it in a sort of considerable haste and eagerness, a solution that really suited the needs and the frame of mind of the unquiet masses in search of a simple, plain and fully effective religion.⁵⁰

Febvre's downgrading of the abuses of the Church as a cause of the Reformation went together with his proposed “shift in the points of view” [“déplacements de points de vue”] from an ecclesiastical history of the Reformation to a history of the “sentiments of the people” [“sentiments des hommes”].⁵¹ His suggestions, although not immediately, have been a source of inspiration for scholars not only in France, but throughout Europe. Many medievalists, in particular, have taken up Febvre's rejection of the primary role of clerical abuses to argue

⁴⁸ “Reconnaissait pour cause ces abus eux-mêmes”. Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁹ “La Réforme a été le signe et l'œuvre d'une révolution profonde du sentiment religieux”. Ibid., p. 28.

⁵⁰ “Doter les hommes du XVIe siècle de ce qu'ils désiraient, les uns confusément, les autres en toute clarté: une religion mieux adaptée à leurs besoins nouveaux, mieux accordée aux conditions modifiées de leur existence sociale – voilà ce que la Réforme accomplit finalement [...]. Ce qui la caractérise essentiellement, c'est d'avoir su trouver aux troubles de conscience dont souffrait une bonne partie de la chrétienté – c'est d'avoir su proposer à des hommes qui semblaient l'attendre depuis des années et qui l'adoptèrent avec une sorte de hâte et d'avidité significatives, une solution réellement adaptée aux besoins et à l'état d'âme de masses inquiètes, en quête d'une religion simple, claire et pleinement efficace”. Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 27.

against the representation of the Protestant Reformation and the Council of Trent as epoch-making processes that contrasted sharply with the institutional decadence and moral decay of the Medieval church.⁵² This socio-cultural approach has therefore led historians to different periodisations, which downplay the discontinuity and modernising character of the Reformation and the Council of Trent by placing them within longer periods of time. The titles of Jean Delumeau's triptych of books, published between 1989 and 1990 (*La Péch  et la peur; Rassurer et protéger; L'aveu et le pardon*) [*Sin and Fear; Reassure and Protect; Confession and Pardon*], are emblematic examples of this switch towards a history of religious practices and mentalities, whose development in the *longue durée* often proceeds in different directions and at a different pace from the transformations of ecclesiastical institutions.⁵³ By virtue of similar criteria, the first volume of Pierre Chaunu's *Le temps des Réformes: histoire religieuse et système de civilisation* [*The Time of Reforms: Religious History and System of Civilisation*] deals with *La crise de la Chr tient * [*The Crisis of Christendom*] through a period that spans the three centuries between 1250 and 1550.⁵⁴ One year after the publication of Chaunu's books, John Bossy issued his *Christianity in the West*, which covers the period 1400-1700.⁵⁵ During the early nineties of the XX century, Louis Ch tellier has carried on Febvre's proposal. Furthermore, he has developed Delumeau's research on the widespread religious anxieties that stemmed from the perceived discrepancy between the feeling of sinfulness and the inadequacy of the institutionalised forms of penitence in the XVI century. In *L'aveu et le pardon*, Delumeau had drawn a parallel between the Tridentine insistence on the consolatory value of confession and the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith, in so far as both of them were aimed precisely at soothing the

⁵² Another French pathfinder of this historiographical trend was  tienne Delaruelle, a priest and medievalist historian who spent almost all his life in Toulouse. He published his first article in the same year when Febvre wrote his famous essay (1929). Delaruelle's research was oriented towards an approach that, although developed autonomously, closely resembles the one of the *Annales* school, in that it pays particular attention to the forms of popular religious practices and cults among the laity. See the collection of his essays *La pi t  populaire au Moyen  ge* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmio, 1975).

⁵³ Jean Delumeau, *La P    et la peur: la culpabilisation en Occident (XIII -XVIII  si cles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1989); *Rassurer et protéger: le sentiment de s curit  dans l'Occident d'autrefois* (Paris: Fayard, 1989); *L'aveu et le pardon: les difficult s de la confession (XIII -XVIII  si cles)* (Paris: Fayard, 1990). See also *Le Catholicisme entre Luther et Voltaire* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971).

⁵⁴ Pierre Chaunu, *Le temps des R formes. Histoire religieuse et syst me de civilisation*, 2 vols.: 1. *La crise de la Chr tient  1250-1550*, 2. *La R forme protestante* (Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 1984; I edition: Paris, Fayard, 1975).

⁵⁵ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

widespread anxieties of believers. Châtellier, instead, has shed more light on the role played by rural missionaries in providing consolation to the mass of the poor.⁵⁶

3.3. The German-Italian Institutional Approach to the Council of Trent

The methods and the developments of what I labelled as the socio-cultural approach to “Early Modern Catholicism” did not affect at all Jedin and hardly reverberated on the orientation of his disciples. They kept their attention focused on the institutional aspects of the question and on clerical abuses as a fundamental component of it. It was only after Jedin’s death in 1980 that the two historiographical traditions have started to loosen their previous reciprocal neglect, thus trying to mingle their respective needs and directions of research. Firstly, as will be explained later on, the scholars who had remained longer in Jedin’s wake have subsequently taken into account Febvre’s ideas, in an attempt to outline the complex interactions between the ecclesiastical level and the popular beliefs and religious practices. Secondly, in France, the cradle of the socio-cultural approach to the XVI-century religious history, the attention has recently returned to a more traditional kind of church history. Thirdly, Jedin’s legacy has found new life among English and American historians after flourishing for decades in Italy, where Delio Cantimori first introduced Jedin’s essay *Katholische Reformation oder Gegenreformation?*. Cantimori’s review, which was published in the journal of opinion *Società* (1946),⁵⁷ sparked an intense debate that has never really extinguished in Italy; on the contrary, the terms of the debate have often had a strong echo beyond the Italian borders.

In the course of the twenties, Delio Cantimori had been a sympathiser of fascism for what he regarded as its republican and anticlerical features. He became disillusioned, however, with the subsequent politics of the regime, notably the signing of the Lateran Pacts in 1929, which he perceived as a betrayal of the original ideals of the fascist movement. In the late thirties,

⁵⁶ See Louis Châtellier, *La religion des pauvres. Les missions rurales en Europe et la formation du catholicisme moderne, XVI^e-XIX^e siècles* (Paris: Aubier, 1993). Cf. Louis Châtellier, *Le catholicisme en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Société d’édition d’enseignement supérieur (SEDES), 1995).

⁵⁷ Delio Cantimori, ‘Riforma cattolica’, *Società*, II (1946), pp. 820-834 (reprinted in Delio Cantimori, *Studi di storia*, Torino: Einaudi, 1959, pp. 537-553).

also under the influence of his wife, a communist militant, he drew close to the Communist party. In 1948, at about the time he became friends with Jedin, he joined the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which he abandoned eight years later, after the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian uprising. Given the anticlerical background of Cantimori, his positive review of Jedin's article seemed to create a slender bridge between Italian Catholic and lay historians, whose mutual acrimony had ancient origins. Machiavelli had first formulated the opinion that the presence of the papacy in Italy had always prevented the unification of the peninsula while weakening, at the same time, the moral and civic virtues of the Italians.⁵⁸ Paolo Sarpi's negative judgement of the Council of Trent (in his *Istoria del Concilio tridentino*) lay instead behind the interpretations of the Counter-Reformation as a mere repressive process that coincided with the beginning of Italian cultural decadence.⁵⁹ The long-lasting controversy had eventually reached a bitter climax in post-Risorgimento Italy, when Pius IX banned Catholics from participating in Italian politics. In this peculiar context, Jedin's "twin concepts" of Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation appeared to Cantimori as the ideal solution to overcome the enduring contrasts between opposite ideological camps. The German historian had actually explained that

it is impossible to speak of Catholic Reform *or* Counter-Reformation: rather one must speak of Catholic Reform *and* Counter-Reformation. It is not a matter of *either or*, but one of *both and*. *The Catholic Reform was the church's reorientation toward Catholic ideals of living through an internal process of renewal, while Counter-Reformation was the self-assertion of the church in the struggle against Protestantism.* The Catholic Reform was based on a grass-roots reform that emerged under the pressure of decline among the individual institutions within the church during the late Middle Ages; it achieved victory with the conquest of the papacy, the convening of the Council of Trent and its implementation. If Catholic Reform was the soul of a reviving church, its body was the Counter-Reformation [...]. At the point of intersection between them was the papacy.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See Adriano Prosperi, 'Una chiesa, due chiese, nessuna chiesa. Riforma italiana ed eretici italiani', in Philip Benedict, Silvana Seidel Menchi, and Alain Tallon (eds.), *La Réforme en France et en Italie. Contacts, comparaisons et contrastes* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 2007), pp. 595-634 (614).

⁵⁹ See Hubert Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, 4 vols. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957-1961), II, pp. 7-12; Simon Ditchfield, 'In Sarpi's Shadow: Coping with Trent the Italian Way', in *Studi in memoria di Cesare Mozzarelli*, 2 vols. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2008), I, pp. 585-606 (585-586).

⁶⁰ Hubert Jedin, 'Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation?', in David Martin Luebke, *The Counter-*

The renewal of the Church (Catholic Reform) and the Catholic reaction against the Protestant challenge (Counter-Reformation) could be interpreted, according to Jedin, as the two sides of the same coin. Nonetheless, he made clear the superiority of the former aspect, which was the real driving force that preceded and animated the latter. The first spontaneous attempts at self-reform of Church members had begun in the fifteenth century (this is where Jedin's *Geschichte* starts)⁶¹ and lasted until the eve of the Council of Trent. The two decades between 1540 and 1560 saw the birth of new religious orders, namely the Jesuits, and marked the awakening of the papacy, which eventually managed to tackle resolutely the religious crisis. The Inquisition was one of the instruments created for the self-defence of the Church. The decision to summon the Council, instead, bore its fruit in the final phase of the Council itself (1562-1563), with a whole series of reform decrees dealing with pastoral and missionary issues. Finally, the long period from the end of the Council until the French Revolution was characterised by the implementation of these decrees under the direction of the papacy, which unified the two aspects of Reform and Counter-Reformation.⁶²

The religious groups or institutions that, in Jedin's view, played a leading role in these processes have attracted the interests of ensuing scholars and disciples of the German historian. An important series of studies has been devoted, for instance, to the pastoral activity of bishops and cardinals during and after the Council. After Giuseppe Alberigo's work on the Italian bishops at the Council of Trent,⁶³ Paolo Prodi (a disciple of Jedin, like Alberigo) examined the figure of the cardinal of Bologna Gabriele Paleotti, while Adriano Prosperi chose to study Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona.⁶⁴ More recently, some American historians have revived a similar Jedinian interpretative scheme through their monographs on cardinals Marcello Cervini (William Hudon)⁶⁵ and Gasparo Contarini (Elisabeth Gleason).⁶⁶

Reformation (Malden [MA, USA]-Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 21-45 (44-45). Italics in the original.

⁶¹ Jedin, *A History of the Council of Trent*, I, pp. 5-31.

⁶² See O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, pp. 51-53. For a critique of Jedin's interpretation, especially as regards Jedin's downplay of the Inquisition role, see Paolo Simoncelli, 'Inquisizione romana e riforma in Italia', *Rivista storica italiana*, 100 (1988), pp. 5-125.

⁶³ Giuseppe Alberigo, *I vescovi italiani al Concilio di Trento (1545-1547)* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1959).

⁶⁴ Prosperi, *Tra evangelismo e Controriforma*.

⁶⁵ William V. Hudon, *Marcello Cervini and Ecclesiastical Government in Tridentine Italy* (DeKalb (Illinois, USA): Northern Illinois University Press, 1992).

⁶⁶ Elisabeth G. Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

From a slightly different point of view, the function of the papacy – which Jedin described as the pivotal institution of the Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation – has been the subject of another noteworthy book by Paolo Prodi.⁶⁷ The title *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime* [*The Papal Prince: One Body and Two Souls*] makes clear Prodi's main thesis: after the Great Schism (1378-1417) and the conciliarist crisis, a new monarchical model of the papacy took shape. Its peculiar fusion of spiritual authority and temporal power constituted, to some extent, the prototype of the modern state. Nevertheless, this very feature also condemned the papacy to a decadence by virtue of "the clericalisation of the internal state apparatus and the statisation or politicisation of the ecclesiastical corps".⁶⁸ This decadence coincided with and was one of the causes of the Italian cultural and political decline from the XVI century onwards.⁶⁹ Interestingly, the close examination of one of Jedin's key categories (the Renaissance papacy as the junction of Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation) led Prodi to rather Sarpian conclusions about the negative effects of the domination of post-Tridentine Church in Italy.

3.4. *New Conceptualisations: the Categories of "Social Disciplining", "Confessionalisation" and "Italian Reformation"*

In contrast to Prodi, Adriano Prosperi has tried to cast light not only on the negative effects of the papal sovereignty in Italy, but also on the institutional and cultural bonds through which the papacy has built its hegemony in the peninsula. Its unique long-standing leadership function has emerged particularly during the frequent political crises of republican Italy.⁷⁰ For these reasons, Benedetto Croce had praised the "fruits of social utility" produced by the Counter-Reformation.⁷¹ The Church of the Counter-Reformation, in Prosperi's view,

⁶⁷ Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice. Un corpo e due anime: la monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1982).

⁶⁸ Paolo Prodi, 'La Chiesa Tridentina tra papato e stati', in *Il paradigma tridentino, Un'epoca di storia della Chiesa* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 2011), pp. 55-69 (55).

⁶⁹ Cf. Ditchfield, 'In Sarpi's Shadow', pp. 596-599.

⁷⁰ See Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza. Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Torino: Einaudi, 1996), pp. X-XI.

⁷¹ "[La Chiesa] continua ad adempiere molteplici uffici morali e politici, che non si saprebbe in qual modo, almeno per adesso e per lungo tratto di tempo, sostituire; ancor oggi l'opera della Controriforma matura frutti di

could attain its hegemony through a mixture of repression and persuasion that aimed at the “conquest of the soul”:⁷² hence the interplay of inquisitors, confessors and missionaries, who are depicted as the pillars of the rooting of the Church by means of the social disciplining of the Italian society. The concepts of “social disciplining” and “confessionalisation”, which were formulated by German scholars, have been adopted by many other historians, including Prodi, who has expressed a growing dissatisfaction with the conceptualisation of his maestro. These categories of analysis have provided a sort of middle way between the traditional institutional approach and Febvre’s “history of religious sentiments”, thus allowing to appraise the relations between the developments of the ecclesiastical institutions and the changes in popular religious beliefs and practices.⁷³

For the same purpose, other Italian scholars have tried a different way of integrating Febvre’s suggestions within the classic institutional approach. Their starting point is a different assessment of the relations of power among the agents of what they unhesitatingly define as simply the Counter-Reformation. The real protagonist of that period, according to them, was none of the institutions Jedin pointed out, but rather the Inquisition, which managed to impose its men, aims and methods to the highest ranks of the Church. It was the Inquisition (“the true driving force of the Roman curia”)⁷⁴ that dominated the Council and even the election of the popes. Furthermore, some of the new religious groups, such as the Theatines, quickly turned into para-inquisitorial structures in charge of the surveillance of the conformity of behaviour and beliefs.⁷⁵ The research of these historians have brought to light a considerable amount of documentary evidence from the Inquisition archives, which resulted in Massimo Firpo’s critical editions of the Inquisition trials of cardinal Giovanni Morone,

utilità sociale”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. XXI.

⁷² Cf. Wietse de Boer, *The Conquest of the Soul. Confessions, Discipline and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

⁷³ On the social disciplining and the confessionalisation, see Paolo Prodi (ed.), *Disciplina dell’anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, con la collaborazione di Carla Penuti (Bologna: il Mulino, 1994). In the same volume, see the contributions of Wolfgang Reinhard, ‘Disciplinamento sociale, confessionalizzazione, modernizzazione. Un discorso storiografico’, pp. 101-123, and Heinz Schilling, ‘Chiese confessionali e disciplinamento sociale. Un bilancio provvisorio della ricerca storica’, pp. 125-160. See also Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540-1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷⁴ “Vero centro motore della curia romana”. Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma*, p. 24.

⁷⁵ See Andrea Vanni, *«Fare diligente inquisitione». Gian Pietro Carafa e le origini dei chierici regolari teatini* (Roma: Viella, 2010).

Pietro Carnesecchi, Lorenzo Davidico and the bishop Vittore Soranzo.⁷⁶ Gigliola Fragnito, for her part, has studied the phenomenon of book censorship and its enduring effects on Italian culture,⁷⁷ whereas others have examined the Inquisition control over processes of canonisation (Miguel Gotor)⁷⁸ and mysticism (Adelisa Malena).⁷⁹

The information that emerged from the documentary evidence has induced these historians to question the validity of Jedin's interpretative categories. A more conflictual image of the Council has been sketched, thus casting light on different projects of reform by high churchmen (such as cardinal Pole) who were often involved in the widespread religious ferment. In this respect, Reginald Pole's sojourn in Italy stands out as a unique experience that allows to get an insight into the connections between the struggle for Church reform within the curia and the context of the so-called "Italian Reformation". This concept has been coined to describe the specific religious and cultural phase that began after Luther's defiance to the Catholic Church. The penetration in Italy of the reformers' works from beyond the Alps did not lead to a passive acceptance of them by some groups or to the opposite rejection by others, but it stimulated, on the contrary, a religious experimentation that produced an original fusion of diverse ideas of the most diverse origins.⁸⁰ This process could grow within the large spaces of uncertainty that were left open by the crisis of the Roman Church and its consequent failure to give a satisfactory answer to the need for reform, which was shared by people at all social levels. In this context, the religious debate assumed a European dimension, for it was fuelled by a wide circulation of people, books and ideas among the main cities in Europe.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *Il processo inquisitoriale del cardinal Giovanni Morone. Edizione critica*, 6 vols. (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea, 1989-1995; henceforward *Processo Morone*); Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *I processi inquisitoriali di Pietro Carnesecchi (1557-1567). Edizione critica*, 2 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 1998-2000; henceforward *Processi Carnesecchi*); Massimo Firpo and Sergio Pagano, *I processi inquisitoriali di Vittore Soranzo (1550-1558). Edizione critica*, 2 vols. (Città del Vaticano: Archivio Segreto Vaticano, 2004; henceforward *Processi Soranzo*); Massimo Firpo and Dario Marcatto, *I processi contro don Lorenzo Davidico: il processo vescovile a Novara (1553-1555), il processo inquisitoriale a Roma (1555-1557)* (Città del Vaticano: Archivio segreto vaticano, 2011; henceforward *Processi Davidico*).

⁷⁷ See Gigliola Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo. La censura ecclesiastica e i volgarizzamenti della Scrittura (1471-1605)* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1997); Gigliola Fragnito, *Proibito capire. La Chiesa e il volgare nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2005).

⁷⁸ See Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa. Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Firenze: Olschki, 2002).

⁷⁹ See Adelisa Malena, *L'eresia dei perfetti. Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003).

⁸⁰ See Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmus in Italia. 1520-1580* (Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1987), pp. 92-93.

⁸¹ See Adriano Prosperi and Albano Biondi (eds.), *Libri, idee e sentimenti religiosi nel Cinquecento italiano*

Pole himself was part of this network since his return to Italy in 1532. At first, he joined some of the numerous humanistic literary circles and the groups that gathered in the main Benedictine monasteries. Subsequently, he embraced the doctrines of Juan de Valdés and, together with his circle of friends (the so-called *spirituali*, or *Ecclesia viterbiensis*), tried to translate them into a propaganda campaign that targeted powerful clerical figures as well as a wider public through the publication of religious books.

It is not by chance that this period of Pole's life has been the subject of historiographical debate among his biographers since the second half of the XX century. In the seventies, Dermot Fenlon investigated the relations between Pole's religious trajectory in Italy and his activity at the Council of Trent.⁸² Paolo Simoncelli, instead, has focused his attention on the influence of Juan de Valdés's doctrines on the intellectual trajectory of Pole, who tried, according to this reading, to translate them into a wide propaganda campaign aimed at proposing a peculiar political line to the imminent Council.⁸³ The American historian Thomas F. Mayer has emphasised, on the contrary, the continuities in Pole's religious evolution, as well as its similarities with the sensibility of other prelates that seemed to oppose him.⁸⁴ Mayer's interpretation also stressed the role of Pole's personality, instead of his religious beliefs, in determining his actions at the Council. According to this analysis, which implicitly adopts categories such as the "Renaissance self-fashioning",⁸⁵ the ambiguous and contradictory aspects of Pole's thought and theology derive from his typically humanist fondness for playing with language and from a dialectical understanding.⁸⁶

The two discordant explanations of Simoncelli and Mayer have led to two opposite representations of the process of reformation and the way the Catholic Church reacted against the Protestant defiance and the widespread religious ferment throughout Italy. On the one hand, Paolo Simoncelli (and, subsequently, Massimo Firpo as well) has stressed that this

(Modena: Panini, 1987).

⁸² See Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy. Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

⁸³ See Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, p. 81 ff.

⁸⁴ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 103 ff.

⁸⁵ See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

⁸⁶ See Thomas F. Mayer, 'What to Call the *spirituali*', in Adriano Prosperi, Pierangelo Schiera, and Gabriella Zarri (eds.), *Chiesa cattolica e mondo moderno. Scritti in onore di Paolo Prodi* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2007), pp. 11-26 (25).

process was the result of a bitter conflict between the moderate wing of Pole's *spirituali* and the *intransigenti*, led by Gian Pietro Carafa. While the former, under the strong influence of Juan de Valdés, tried to reconcile the acceptance of some Lutheran doctrines with allegiance to the Church of Rome, the latter interpreted the ecclesiastical reformation in terms of mere repression, for the purpose of preserving uniformity (and consequently control) of religious beliefs and practices. This representation has drawn on what has proved to be one of the richest and creative traditions of the Italian historiography, which can be traced back to Delio Cantimori's pioneering work *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* [*Italian Heretics of the XVI Century*].⁸⁷ Following Cantimori's suggestions, ensuing studies have clarified the cultural origins, the developments and the spread of specific religious orientations that in some cases would lead to radical outcomes, such as the refusal of any institutionalised church, the indifference to given sets of doctrines or the choice of dissimulating one's own personal beliefs (nicodemism).⁸⁸

On the other hand, Thomas Mayer – following a historiographical trend that for some years has been coming back into fashion, especially in anglophone countries – has endorsed instead the notion of a common “reform tendency”. This embraces, along a continuum, the whole variety of positions arisen within the Catholic hierarchy, whose members were simply divided, in the first instance, by contingent skirmishes of a personal and political nature (to attain the leadership of the reform tendency itself), rather than by religious differences. The two positions at odds stem from different kinds of approach. Simoncelli and Firpo often adopt quite passively the categories of the inquisitors, thus drawing an extremely polarised picture. By contrast, it is curious that Mayer, as well as other scholars such as William V. Hudon and Paul V. Murphy, end up embracing a stance that looks very much like the views expressed by

⁸⁷ Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento. Ricerche storiche* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1939).

⁸⁸ It is not possible to make a comprehensive list of all these studies. As a mere example, see Carlo Ginzburg and Adriano Prosperi, *Giochi di pazienza. Un seminario sul «Beneficio di Cristo»* (Torino: Einaudi, 1975); Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del Cinquecento* (Torino: Einaudi, 1976); Massimo Firpo, *Tra alumbados e «spirituali». Studi su Juan de Valdés e il valdesianesimo nella crisi religiosa del '500 italiano* (Firenze: Olschki, 1990); Massimo Firpo, *Riforma protestante ed eresie nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1993); Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies*; Massimo Firpo, *Gli affreschi di Pontormo a San Lorenzo* (Torino: Einaudi, 1997); Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*; Massimo Firpo, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici. Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2001); Marie F. Viallon, *Italie 1541 ou l'unité perdue de l'Église* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2005); Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo vescovo ed eretico. Riforma della Chiesa e Inquisizione nell'Italia del Cinquecento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2006); Luca Addante, *Eretici e libertini nel Cinquecento italiano* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2010).

Chapter II

Hubert Jedin more than a half century ago. The only difference between them lies in the fact that Jedin did not have access to the documents of the Inquisition archives, which are now available for consultation (if not published), although surprisingly ignored by the American historian. Moreover, the view of a substantially homogeneous reform tendency underestimates the importance of the tangle of naturally conflicting interests and ambitions as a driving force within the Church, which basically remains, after all, a structure of power.

CHAPTER III

Pole's *De Reformatione Ecclesiae*: Radical Eclecticism as a Unifying Strategy

1.1. *A Writer for His Own Delight?*

He does not deny that he amuses himself by writing and that he exercises all care and diligence to write well. Nonetheless [...], he writes to himself and not to others. And he behaves like the animals that, with all diligence, raise their offspring until it has grown up and then neglect it without recognising it any longer. This is the way Pole does with his writings, as he says. And he does not believe he fails to honour his debt if they are not issued, for his vocation is not to write, but rather to counsel the pope when he is asked for advice.¹

Thus did Filippo Gheri relate, in his “private letter upon the matters of the most reverend Pole” (written on 29 April 1553 to the papal nuncio in Venice Ludovico Beccadelli),² the “most beautiful comparison”³ with which Pole had replied to the devious request made by Gian Pietro Carafa, during their meeting in the papal basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls. On this occasion Carafa had invited Pole to write “something and let the world see it”.⁴ Their meeting had been set up by pope Julius III, who had been informed of the Holy Office’s secret inquiries about Reginald Pole as well as about other bishops and cardinals. For this reason Julius III had forced Carafa – who had been leading the new Roman Inquisition for 11 years – to immediately suspend all inquiries of that sort and to meet Pole to offer his apologies. Carafa, however, had cleverly managed to turn this humiliating meeting into a new shrewd aggression against the English cardinal.⁵

¹ “Non nega di dilettersi di scrivere et di porci ogni studio et diligentia per scrivere bene, nondimeno [...] scribit sibi non aliis et fa come gli animali che con ogni diligenza allevano il parto fin che è grande et poi se lo scordano intanto che più nol conoscono, et così dice Polo che fa esso delli suoi scritti. Et non crede di mancare il debito suo a non darli fuori, non essendo la sua vocatione il scrivere, ma consigliare fedelmente il papa quando è domandato del suo parere”. Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 351.

² “Lettera appartata sopra li fatti del reverendissimo Polo” (ibid., p. 347; cf. 347-353). On Filippo Gheri, the trusty collaborator of cardinal Morone, see Antonella Giusti’s entry in *DBI*, LIII.

³ “Bellissima comparatione”. Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 350.

⁴ “[Scrivere] alcuna cosa et lassarla vedere al mondo”. Ibid., p. 351.

⁵ Furthermore, Carafa did not suspend the Inquisitorial inquiries, which proceeded with further questioning of

A few months later, in a long letter to Girolamo Muzzarelli (the Master of the Sacred Palace), Pole further expanded upon the reasons of his reluctance to publish.⁶ In this circumstance – he stated – he would not repeat what he often replied to those who, like Muzzarelli himself, almost equated Pole’s hesitancy to a crime, as though he hid the talent he got from God by burying it under the ground. Against such pressures, he usually protested that in his writings he could hardly find anything revealing his alleged talent or being worth publishing.⁷ This rhetorical stance actually concealed a more substantial reason, which was indeed, according to Pole, the “true cause” for his resistance to his friends’ appeals. In his view, “writing publicly” was equivalent to preaching. Given that he was not formally allowed to preach, the same should apply therefore to the publication of his writings, which he might not decide to issue by his “private authority”.⁸ Pole was aware that this position contrasted with the one commonly held by many writers, who ascribed the publication of their own works to their friends’ exhortations.⁹ In his opinion, though, this could never constitute a sufficient cause for publication, no matter if these books were worth reading; for the same reason, for instance, nobody who was endowed with oratory could legitimately start to

witnesses and acquisition of evidence. Far from being attributable to a personal disagreement with Julius III, Carafa’s disobedience reveals instead a bitter power conflict between the papal authority and the Holy Office. This rift would be healed to the latter’s advantage with the 1555 election of Carafa himself to the papal throne. Cf. Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma*, pp. 48-49, 295-301.

⁶ The letter, which was written from Maguzzano, exists in different copies. Except for the one in *Vat. lat.* 5967 (ff. 358r-365v), which bears the date of 9 August 1553, all the other copies are dated 6 August, although *Vat. lat.* 5827 is also corrected to 9 August. Cf. Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, II, p. 138 and ff., n. 636. My quotations will be from the copy in Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (BNN), MS. IX.A.14, ff. 48r-53r. Muzzarelli’s reply to this letter is also present in this volume, ff. 44r-47r (cf. Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, II, pp. 176-181).

⁷ “Nunc quod me ad libri editionem hortaris, quia instat reverendissimus Neapolitanus [Carafa], quod ipse etiam tua sponte non tam de eo libro quam de caeteris meis scriptis in lucem proferendis tam acriter et vehementer mecum agis ut criminis loco obicias quod tam diu ea supprimam et occultem, quasi talentum Domini ad meum et aliorum usum commendatum sub terra defossum abscondere soleo. Hic quidem non hoc tibi respondeo, quod vere possem et aliis idem rogantibus respondere soleo, nihil me in meis scriptis agnoscere quod eiusmodi talenti rationem habeat ut prolatum in tanto scriptorum numero prodesse possit. Hoc enim nolo tam meum esse iudicium quam tuum; imo hac in re siquid in meis scriptis reperiatur quod editum utilitatem aliis afferre possit, hoc tibi potius quam mihi iudicandum relinquo”. BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 48v.

⁸ “Quid enim aliud est publice scribere quam populum ad concionem vocatum alloqui vel, si res controversas tractans, eas tandem decidas, ius publice dicere? Quod si voce facere non licet, ne scripto quidem mihi unquam licere volui. Habes nunc veram causam cur, cum de rebus ipsis quas scribendo tractare soleam, iudicandi maiorem auctoritatem amicis semper tribuerim quam mihi sumpserim, de scriptis tamen divulgandis numquam illorum iudicio stare voluerim, quam causam probatum iri spero”. Ibid., f. 49r.

⁹ “Qua in re non sum nescius longe diversam me a reliquis scri-/ptoribus rationem sequi, quamquam me in numero scriptorum non pono, qui siquid scripsi numquam certe eo animo scripsi ut quicquam ederem. Sed video alios, cum scripta sua divulgant, amicorum fere semper hortationes in causa fuisse dicere”. Ibid., ff. 48v-49r.

publicly preach or deliver an address in courtrooms.¹⁰ Thus Pole entitled only the pontiff to the ultimate decision on whether and when to publish his works, especially as far as “controversial matters” were concerned. It was the pope, indeed, “who has received from God the right and authority to decide upon what pertains to the benefit of the universal Church”.¹¹

Both Pole's letter to Muzzarelli and his reply to Carafa's insistence (although overflowing with the hypocrisy that characterised the whole encounter between the two prelates) are emblematic of the attitude which he almost constantly showed towards any proposal to publish his writings. Despite solicitation and pressure from friends and adversaries (and even from the pope), Pole was well aware of the heated controversies such publishing enterprises could arouse, and provided on every occasion the most diverse excuses for his unwillingness to issue his numerous books. At his death he consequently left an imposing manuscript corpus, of which about 3,600 folios have survived, despite heavy losses.¹² Pole's reticence, however, did not affect only the publication of his works, but their very contents: he often managed to conceal his innermost beliefs, as well as the profound motives of the choices he took or evaded, behind the unmistakable wide-ranging and sinuous prose of his correspondence and his writings. In this respect, it is no surprise to read two contrasting descriptions of him such as those formulated by his friends Ludovico Beccadelli (in his biography of the English cardinal) and Girolamo Seripando, the superior general of the Augustinian Order. On the one hand, Beccadelli depicted Pole as a prolix author, “more Asiatic than Attic in writing, which arose from the abundance of expressions which his fruitful intelligence supplied him”.¹³ On the other hand, according to Seripando, “nothing pertained more to Pole rather than being silent”.¹⁴ In the aforementioned letter to Muzzarelli,

¹⁰ “Mihi vero numquam satis iusta ea causa visa est cuiquam edendi scripta sua quod amici hoc suaserint, etiam si opus dignum omnium auribus scripsissent, non magis quam si quis facultate dicendi praeditus, amicorum hortationibus adductus, privata autoritate populum ad concionem vocaret atque e suggestu verba faceret, vel si viris dicendi peritus tribunal ascenderet, ius populo dicturus, quia amici hoc suaderent”. Ibid., f. 49r.

¹¹ “Quo vero tempore id faciendum, et num omnino aliquid edendum sit, etiam si utilia in eis reperiantur, hoc nec tuum nec meum iudicium esse volo, sed eius cui Deus ius et auctoritatem de omnibus quae pertinent ad universae Ecclesiae utilitatem decernendi dedit”. Ibid., f. 48r.

¹² Cf. Mayer, ‘A Reluctant Author’, p. 15.

¹³ “Era lunghetto, et più asiatico nello scrivere che attico, il che procedeva dalla copia delli concetti che gli somministrava il suo fecondo ingegno”. Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 331.

¹⁴ “Cui nihil tam erat proprium quam tacere”. Quoted by Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience*, p. 116.

Pole himself maintained that he did not count himself as a writer, for he had never written anything with the intention of publishing.¹⁵

1.2. Or an Astute Author?

Nevertheless, the long series of manuscript versions of his *De reformatione Ecclesiae* tells a different story. The three known volumes that contain the different versions are in the Vatican Library,¹⁶ in the Holy Office archives (Rome)¹⁷ and in the National Library of Naples¹⁸ (henceforward I will refer to these manuscripts respectively with the acronyms BAV I or BAV II, ACDF and BNN). The abundant cuts and rewrites of this work, which was ceaselessly revised over a fifteen-year period, unmask the image of the author who writes exclusively for his own delight as a purely rhetorical and defensive expedient. During the whole process of composition, Pole was actually very careful to tailor the contents and the style of the text to the different targets which he had in mind each time for his treatise. At least some of the versions of *De reformatione* were presumably conceived for distinct kinds of audience. The identification of the target which Pole had in mind for his treatise is therefore a question of crucial importance to grasp the meaning of the long branching sequence of manuscripts, on which Pole worked from the first unsuccessful summonses of the Council until the eve of his return to England. There is evidence that he even went on correcting his drafts in the last five years of his life, during his diplomatic mission to restore Catholicism in Mary Tudor's England. Furthermore, the very last corrections to the final version of the text were certainly made posthumously by some of Pole's trusty collaborators, who intended to use *De reformatione* for a very different publishing enterprise, as will be shown later.

The hypothesis of a chronological series of revisions, which Pole made on the same text over a period of many years, might not be sufficient, therefore, to explain the existence of

¹⁵ "Quamquam me in numero scriptorum non pono, qui siquid scripsi numquam certe eo animo scripsi ut quicquam ederem". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 49r.

¹⁶ Vatican City, Vatican Library (henceforward BAV), *Vat. Lat.*, 5964.

¹⁷ ACDF, *Stanza storica*, E-6 a, fasc. 2.

¹⁸ BNN, MS. IX.A.14.

several manuscript versions of *De reformatione*. The description of these relations in terms of a linear succession of rewrites, which had their origin in a sort of common *Urtext* and were created for a specific audience, can only apply, at best, to the earliest stages of the composition. These coincide with the years that preceded the bull of summons of the Council of Trent (*Laetare Ierusalem*, November 1544) and the opening session, on 13 December 1545. The two most significant elements that allow to identify the first six versions of *De reformatione* as belonging to this phase are the references to the widespread need for a general council and the presence of doctrinal positions that would become unacceptable a few years later, in particular after the approval of the decree on justification in 1547. The contents and the state of these versions, all of which are fragmentary drafts, do not constitute a clear indication that, at this stage, the treatise was meant to be published. Such intentions emerge instead more distinctly in the following versions, most of which are fair copies prepared for the press, as the quotation marks and biblical references in the margins undoubtedly reveal. It is at this point, though, that the objectives and, consequently, the recipients of the intended publication begin to diverge. Whereas the continuity of Pole's revisions and rewrites of the core contents of *De reformatione* is still evident in the versions of BAV-I, the other two known manuscript volumes contain fair copies that represent the ends of two branches deviating from the linear sequence of the early fragmentary drafts. On the one hand, BNN reveals its dependence from the previous drafts of the Vatican Library, thus reflecting an intermediate stage of the work. Although originally meant for the press, the incomplete state of this text reveals that the publication project must be aborted at some point. On the other hand, the purposes that inspired this endeavour significantly differ from the ones that animated the realisation of the second fair copy (ACDF), which reflects a late stage of the work. The presence of posthumous corrections is further evidence that this version was conceived as a component of the collective publishing enterprise promoted by Pole's friends and colleagues after his death.

None of the manuscripts of *De reformatione* contains a dedication, and the doctrinal contents of the earliest versions induce to include in the range of hypotheses the possibility that some versions were meant for a more limited audience, maybe the very circle of friends at Viterbo (the so-called *spirituali* or *Ecclesia viterbiensis*), in order to nourish the frequent

conversations that took place in Pole's summer residence. *De reformatione* itself could reproduce one of these conversations, since it is written in the form of a dialogue. Furthermore, the last part of this work resembles the patterns of the scriptural commentaries which were written by many members of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* (such as Marcantonio Flaminio, Alvise Priuli or Pole himself, who composed in these years some commentaries on the Psalms) for the purpose of being discussed during their private conversations in Viterbo.

It must be noted, though, that the identification of the two fictitious characters of *De reformatione* by the letters Q. (*Quaestio*) and R. (*Responsio*) follows the traditional rhetorical genre of the *percontatio* (or *exquisitio*), which simulated a dialogue between the orator and his opponent or his audience. This structure leads to a second hypothesis about the target of Pole's treatise, which could be conceived as a work of propaganda to achieve consensus on the conception of ecclesiastical reform which Pole tried to advance at the Council of Trent. This supposition is supported by an isolated title that appears on *Vat. lat.* 5966 (f. 2r), one of the nine manuscript volumes of the Vatican Library (*Vat. Lat.* 5964-5972) where the most significant remaining part of Pole's writings is kept: "Dialogus volg[are] appartenente alla riforma trattato altrimente nelli libri dell'off[icio] del pont[efice]". This title indicates that a translation of *De reformatione* had been probably intended but was never completed,¹⁹ or it got lost. In this case, Pole's work could assume the same function of other books which were composed or translated at Viterbo (among them *The Benefit of Christ*, Calvin's *Institutio religionis christianae* and Juan de Valdés's *Christian Alphabet* and *Catechism*) and constituted a crucial part of the propaganda campaign that targeted powerful clerical figures, as well as a wider public in Italy and abroad, in view of the imminent Council. The title on *Vat. lat.* 5966 adds up to the frequent parallelisms between Pole's writings on the papal office (*De summo pontifice*) and on the reformation of the Church (*De reformatione Ecclesiae*) to confirm that his conceptions of reform and of the role of the papacy – especially when developed in apocalyptic terms – tended to become increasingly intertwined, thus influencing each other and producing a powerful vision that could appeal to a great variety of people.

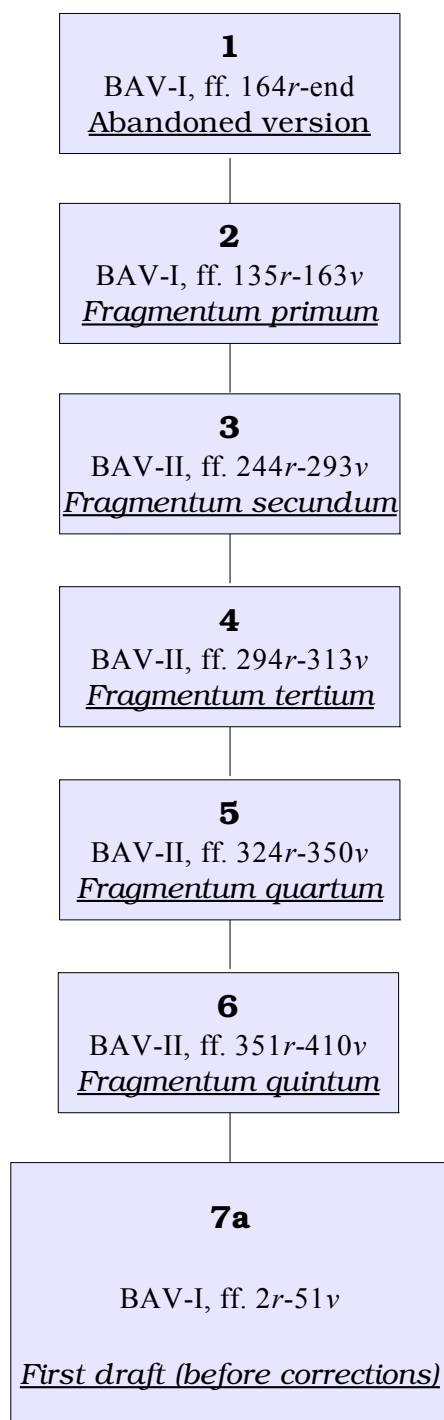
It appears less likely that *De reformatione* was destined for the conciliar fathers at Trent. The very structure of the treatise induces to dismiss this hypothesis as the least plausible.

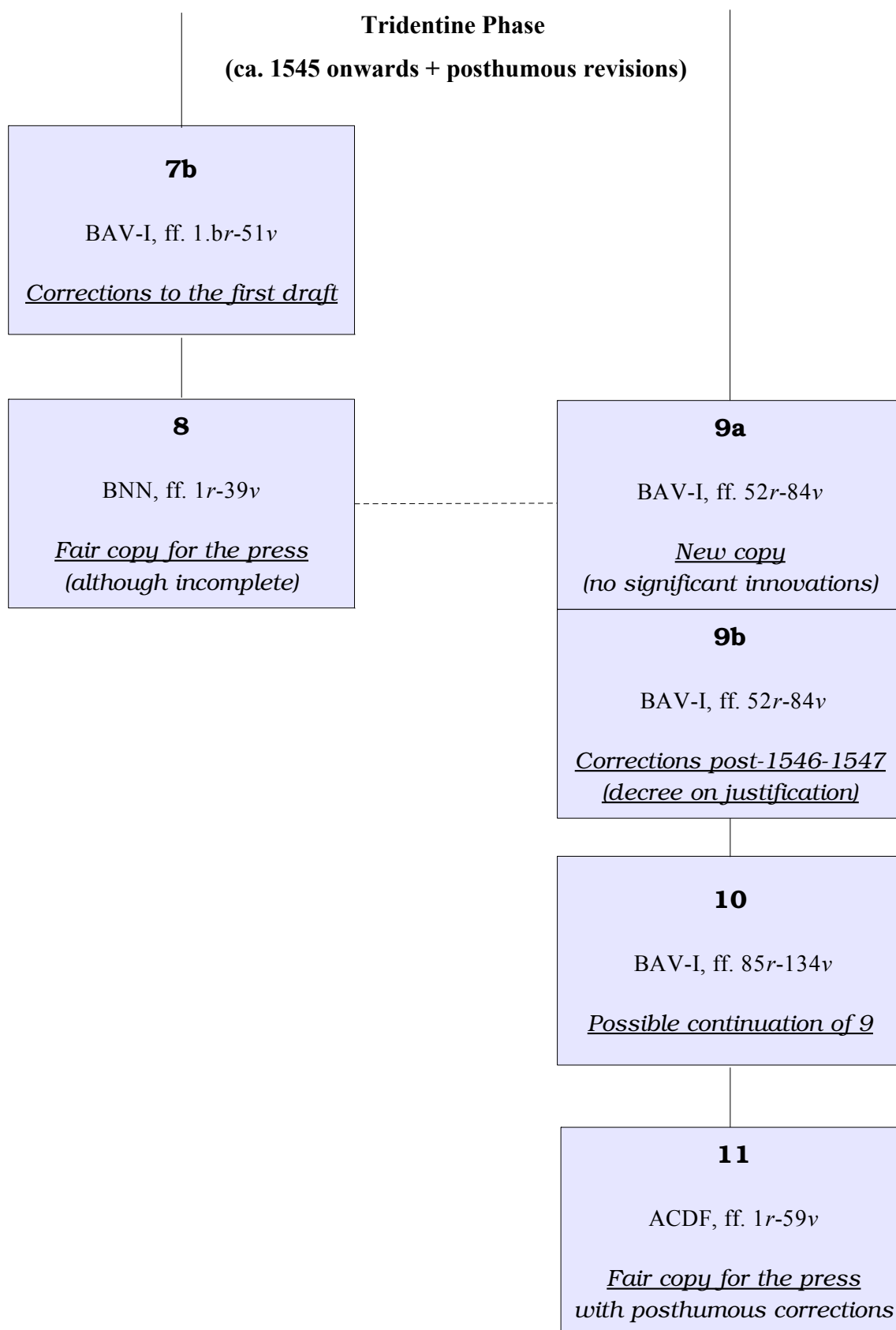
¹⁹ See Mayer, 'A Reluctant Author', p. 67.

Pole's exposition, indeed, does not outline at all a precise and detailed agenda for reform; on the contrary, as will be shown below, it enshrouds it with an enraptured attitude that often expresses itself through a marked spiritualism.

The relations among all the versions of *De reformatione* are outlined in the following schema and will be explained in detail further on in this chapter. The smaller boxes of the schema stand for the fragmentary versions, which appear in the early stages of the composition, while the bigger boxes represent the versions that were meant as a preparation for possible editions of the treatise. Dotted lines indicate the presence of similarities but not a clear relation of dependence between two versions. This is the especially the case with the relation between BNN (intended for the press) and the main series of revisions in BAV.

Pre-Tridentine Phase
(ca. 1540-1545)





2. Codicological Analysis of the Manuscripts of De Reformatione Ecclesiae

1. Abandoned version (BAV-I, ff. 164r-until the end of BAV-I).

In the incipit of this incomplete version, the reference to those who consider “a general council to be necessary in these times”,²⁰ indicates that it was composed before the opening of the Council of Trent in 1545. The fact that it has fewer corrections than other variants also suggests that this was an abandoned version.²¹

2. “Fragmentum primum” (BAV-I, ff. 135r-163v).

On the first page, the title reads “De modo reformandae Ecclesiae per ministerium verbi Dei ad exemplar eorum qui eadem Ecclesiae primi ministri verbi extitere”.

Below the title, on the left: “Principium correctum”.

The incipit of this version is exactly the same as in version n. 1.

At the bottom of the page: “Principium [...] fragmentum primum”.

3. “Fragmentum secundum sine fine”? (BAV-II, ff. 244r-293v).²²

Some of the corrections in this fragment are autograph.

4. “Fragmentum tertium sequitur de reformatione” (BAV-II, ff. 294r-313v).²³

5. “Fragmentum quartum” (BAV-II, ff. 324r-350v).²⁴

6. “Fragmentum quintum de reformatione circa populum” (BAV-II, ff. 351r-410v).²⁵

The incipit of this version is the same of versions 1 and 2.

²⁰ “Concilium generale necessarium his temporibus esse”. BAV, *Vat. Lat.*, 5964, f. 164r.

²¹ See Mayer, ‘A Reluctant Author’, p. 66.

²² See *ibid.*

²³ See *ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 66. According to Mayer, the hand of the autograph corrections and the differences between this and other versions support the priority of this variant.

²⁵ See *ibid.*

7. Draft and corrections

7a. First draft (before corrections) (BAV-I, ff. 2r-51v).

The original incipit of this version (f. 2r, originally marked as 1) repeats the same wording of versions 1, 2 and 6.²⁶

7b. Corrections to the first draft (7a) (BAV-I, ff. 1br-51v).

In a later stage, a sheet of paper was added before this and numbered "1.b". The handwriting might belong to Marcantonio Faita, a secretary of Pole's in England and later of Morone's.²⁷ The new incipit ("Saepe mihi cogitanti de Ecclesiae reformatione, quae nunc fere omnibus est in ore et ab optime quoque iampridem flagitatur") closely corresponds, in its amended version, to the incipit of BNN, which drops the reference to the need for a general council. This text signals therefore a turning point in the composition of *De reformatione*, revealing the transition from the pre-Tridentine phase to the conciliar years.

8. Fair copy for the press (although incomplete) (BNN, ff. 1r-39v).

Incipit (f. 1r): "Saepe mihi cogitanti de Ecclesiae reformatione, quae nunc fere omnibus est in ore, et ab optime quoque iampridem flagitatur".

The text reveals its dependence from version n. 7b. This manuscript is a fair copy with very few self-corrections of the copyist himself for minor mistakes. The text is followed by the copies of two letters. The former was written from Rome, on 1st September 1553, by the Master of the Sacred Palace (official papal theologian), Girolamo Muzzarelli, who urged Pole to publish "the books which you wrote in a scholarly and erudite way, as well as piously and devoutly".²⁸ The latter is the aforementioned letter of Pole to Muzzarelli.²⁹ It bears the title

²⁶ "Q. Quid est quod dicimus reformari Ecclesiam oportere? Hoc enim modo loquendi utuntur fere omnes qui concilium generale necessarium his temporibus esse iudicant; ob hoc enim necessarium esse affirmant ut Ecclesia reformetur. Quid est ergo reformari Ecclesiam?"

²⁷ Cf. Mayer, 'A Reluctant Author', p. 64. In the course of his deposition of 21st January 1570, the poet Niccolò Franco mentioned Faita as one of the copyists of Pole's works. See Angelo Mercati, *I costituti di Niccolò Franco (1568-1570) dinanzi l'Inquisizione di Roma, esistenti nell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1955), p. 179; cfr. p. 34 note 52. For further information on Marcantonio Faita, see Sergio Pagano and Concetta Ranieri, *Nuovi documenti su Vittoria Colonna e Reginald Pole* (Città del Vaticano: Archivio vaticano, 1989), p. 47 note 52; Marcantonio Flaminio, *Lettere*, Alessandro Pastore (ed.) (Roma: Edizioni dell'Ateneo & Bizzarri, 1978), p. 175 note 4.

²⁸ "Libros quos non minus docte et erudite quam pie et sancte scripsisti". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 45r; cf. ff. 45r-47r.

²⁹ See above, p. 56, note 6.

“Responsio ad epistolam Magistri Sacri Palatii. Reginaldi cardinali Poli”,³⁰ but the date (6 August 1553) shows that this was the reply to a previous letter by Muzzarelli. Whereas these two letters, as well as the absence of corrections in the manuscript, support the hypothesis that the fair copy of BNN was originally meant for the press, the incomplete state of the text reveals that the publication project must be aborted at some point.

9. New copy and corrections post-decree on justification (1546-1547) (BAV-I, ff. 52r-84v).

This text marks the passage from the versions leading to BNN to the final stage of ACDF. The first copy (9a) corresponds to a large extent to BNN and the versions that preceded it, while the numerous corrections (9b) point towards the text of ACDF.

Revised incipit (9b): “Cum Ecclesiae reformatio nunc omnibus sit in ore, et ab optime quoque iampridem flagitetur, mihi de ea saepe cogitari [...] in mentem venerunt”.³¹

Several passages from 9a (which has quotation marks and biblical references in the margin) are completely rewritten either on top or at the bottom of the pages. In some cases, the formulation of the revised passages places a different emphasis on theological statements that could prove compromising for the author. This is the case, for instance, in the assertions about the value of faith and good works in the justification of man,³² a theme which will be considered further on in this chapter. The transition between the first copy (9a) and the revised passages (9b) could therefore mark another important watershed in the composition of *De reformatione*, coinciding with the debate and the approval of the decree on justification, between 1546 and 1547.

10. Possible continuation of 9 (BAV-I, ff. 85r-134v).

This fragment should be the continuation of the preceding version.

11. Fair copy for the press: complete, with posthumous corrections (ACDF, ff. 1r-59v)

F. [III]: “Dialogi Cardinalis de reformatione Ecclesiae. Quint. VI postremum correcti”.

³⁰ Ibid., f. 48r; cfr. ff. 48r-53r.

³¹ BAV, *Vat. Lat.*, 5964, f. 52r.

³² Ibid., ff. 68v-69r. Cf. Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience*, pp. 206-207.

The ACDF manuscript is a complete fair copy that reflects a late stage of the work, for different reasons. Firstly, it is clearly related to the revised text of version 9. Secondly, like version 9, it has marginal quotation marks and biblical references (although incomplete),³³ which are further evidence that this version was initially meant to be published. Thirdly, the handwriting appears to belong to bishop András Dudith, who met Pole only in the early fifties and followed him in his last diplomatic mission in England. It was Dudith, moreover, that authored the Latin translation of Pole's first biography. Fourthly and lastly, one level of the corrections (which are merely lexical and stylistic) is presumably the work of Giambattista Binardi from Modena,³⁴ who became one of the most trusted collaborators of Pole during his legation in England.³⁵ Binardi's corrections constitute the second stage of intervention after the fair copy, which was first corrected by Pole himself. It is likely that Binardi's revision was undertaken posthumously as a contribution to the collective publishing endeavour which was promoted by Pole's friends and colleagues (among whom cardinal Giovanni Morone played a key part) in order to quieten the past suspicions of the Inquisition, both on Pole's and on their own doctrinal beliefs, and to provide a stable basis for their rehabilitation during Pius IV's pontificate. After Pole's death and before heading for Italy, Binardi had also attended to the compilation of the catalogue of Pole's books, which were in his custody.³⁶ The text of ACDF

³³ The quotation marks in the margin are present only until f. 21v, while the last biblical tag is on f. 18v.

³⁴ See Mayer, 'A Reluctant Author', p. 61.

³⁵ On Giambattista Binardi, see Pagano, Ranieri, *Nuovi documenti*, p. 47, note 51; Thomas F. Mayer, 'When Maecenas Was Broke: Cardinal Pole's "Spiritual" Patronage', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27, 2 (1996), pp. 419-435 (420 note 4).

³⁶ See Mayer, 'A Reluctant Author', pp. 17-18. See also the letter written by Giambattista Binardi to Giovanni Morone (Venice, 17 December, without indication of year). Gigliola Fragnito, who quotes some passages from this letter, maintains that, "in all likelihood", it dates back to 1561 (Gigliola Fragnito, *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della cristianità*: Firenze, Olschki, 1988, p. 24 note 76); Thomas Mayer, instead, hypothesises that it was written as early as 1559, "on the base of the certainty that Binardi was then in Venice". Mayer, 'A Reluctant Author', p. 18 note 32. Here the full text of the letter: "Illustrissimae et reverendissime Domine D. mihi colendissime. Ex iis litteris quas, iussu illustrissimae et reverendissimae Dominationis Tuae, Marianus [Vittorio] ad me dedit, intellexi quam tibi grata sit opera mea in legendis cardinalis Poli scriptis, quae res mihi non mediocre calcar addidit ad ea quae restant diligenter persequenda. Etenim post rationem officii mei, quod unum in primis secutus sum cum huc veni atque hoc negotii suscepi, nihil est quod apud me plus habeat ponderis voluntate atque auctoritate tua, omnemque omnis laboris fructum in eo mihi constitutum puto si tibi satisfacero. Nam de mercede, quod idem Marianus scripsit, ut negare non possum eius me indigere, sic vere possum affirmare ea me quam minimum moveri; cuius vel nomen ipsum mihi videtur nescio quid maculae animo meo aspergere, ab omni cupiditate lucri cum caeteris in rebus tum vero in hac potissimum re alienissimo; quam quidem maculam nisi depelleret vel huius mentis meae conscientia et quod nihil ipse omnino petii, vel tenuitas rei familiaris, ac potius in op[e]ra quae satis me purgare debet, si quod ab aliis ultro mihi oblatum est non recusari. Haec sane res magnam partem mihi adimeret voluptatis quam capio quod ita contigerit ut card. Polo atque Alvisio Priulio etiam mortuis operam aliquam navarem, quorum manibus, propter alterius beneficam et liberalem erga me voluntatem, alterius summam benevolentiam et charitatem,

is shorter than the previous versions: especially when commenting scriptural passages, for instance, it proves much more concise than BNN. It also drops some of the theological and ecclesiological passages that were becoming unacceptable within the emerging doctrinal boundaries which were being more precisely defined in these years.

3.1. De reformatione: Contrasting Conceptions of Reform Without an Actual Programme for Reform

All versions of *De reformatione* seem to substantiate the methodological and conceptual framework which has been proposed in chapter I. According to the resultant historiographical interpretation, the process of ecclesiastical reform in the XVI century did not amount either to a sudden awakening of the Church from its torpor, under the severe impact of Luther's protest, or to a providential fulfilment of earlier uncoordinated efforts at reform. It was rather a progressive separation of two different conceptions of reform that had coexisted, until then, in many projects of renewal, thus being less clearly distinguishable than at the end of the process, when they became antithetical. Both of the conceptions of reform which have been described in the introductory chapter are clearly stated in Pole's *De reformatione*. What is more, the more Pole lingers on the different meanings of the concept, the farther he seems from focusing on the concrete content of the ecclesiastical reformation. One of the few (if not the only) concrete measures proposed by Pole – the obligation of bishops to reside in their dioceses – was far from being original, and Pole does not specify how he intended to implement it. According to him, this obligation must be “not merely a law or an order, but rather a necessity”,³⁷ consequently he basically entrusts its enforcement to the goodwill (“bona voluntas”) of the bishops themselves.

tantum me debere intelligo quantum persolvere nullo modo possum. Atque in his quidem scriptis legendis cum libenter omnem operam nunc et curam pono, tum etiam ut eandem navare liceat cum / typis excudentur opto; in quibus sane cum plus etiam laboravero quam meae ferant vires, minus tamen praestitero quam meum vel officium postulat vel voluntas. Plura me cupientem scribere deterrent summae et gravissimae occupationes tuae. Itaque non committam ut diutius morer illustrissimam et reverendissimam Dominationem Tuam, cuius negocia Deus omnia ut ad nominis sui gloriam ac totius Ecclesiae utilitatem maxime fortunet, ipsamque bonis omnibus quam diutissime servet incolumem praecor. Venetiis, XVI Cal. ian. Illustrissima et Reverendissimae Dominationis Tuae addictissimus servus Ioannes Baptista Binardus”. BAV, *Vat. Lat.* 6414, ff. 191r-v.

³⁷ “Non tam lex aut iussio quam necessitas”. BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 5v.

Those who are endowed with “charitas” – “which characterises the pastor of the Christian flock” [“quae propria est pastoris gregis christiani”] – possess therefore the “modum” and “forma” to “build and reform the Christian flock”.³⁸ This circumstance proves to be less serious than the opposite one, that is to say when bishops are endowed with doctrine but lack charity, since it is easier to provide the former with “materia” rather than the latter with “forma”.³⁹ Pole explains his assertion by adding that “the science proper to the Christian flock’s pastor is the doctrine of the spirit, not of the letter”.⁴⁰ As a consequence, any bishop who considers himself “not enough skilled” [“non satis instructum”] should not leave his diocese to study “in gymnasiis litterarum”;⁴¹ on the contrary, by remaining in his bishopric he can certainly learn what pertains to his office more rapidly than he would do by studying at schools, where one acquires only an “introductory knowledge”.⁴² In this way Pole deliberately bypasses the question of the widespread ignorance of the clergy, which was then perceived and denounced as one of the most execrable manifestations of the crisis of the Church. In several passages from *De reformatione*, he does not scruple to admit that he intentionally takes into consideration only the type of bishop that “is already reformed, by God’s grace, according to that form which we explained before”.⁴³ This choice is made even more explicit when Q. reminds R. about the original question of their dialogue, which concerned the possible suggestions to the bishops that have not had a proper education.⁴⁴ In the answer, R.

³⁸ “Qui vero charitate est praeditus, etiamsi doctrinae sit expers, faciliorem rationem habebit aedificandi et reformandi gregis sui quam quivis doctus sine charitate”. Ibid., f. 4xv (this page, which is between f. 4 and f. 5, is not numbered).

³⁹ “Qui vero charitatem habet, indiget autem doctrina, huic non forma quidem aedificandi deesse videtur, sed materia, cui facilius providere poterit de materia quam illi de forma qui amore caret. Hoc enim qui caret numquam bonus architectus erit, etiamsi omni doctrinae genere abundet; qui vero charitate est praeditus, etiamsi doctrinae sit expers, faciliorem rationem habebit aedificandi et reformandi gregis sui quam quivis doctus sine charitate”. Ibid.

⁴⁰ “Scientia [...] quae propria est pastoris gregis Christi est doctrina spiritus, non litterae”. Ibid., f. 6r; cf. f. 8r.

⁴¹ Ibid., ff. 5r, 7r.

⁴² “Si docto illi qui voluntate pascendi gregis caret per canones ut absit a grege non liceat, multo minus huic qui bonae voluntatis in grege pascendo sibi est conscius, licet scientia careat, permitti debere ut ex eo loco discedat, ubi manens multo citius plura et maiora quae ad officium pastoris pertinent sperare poterit se dicere posse quam ea sint quae in gymnasiis litteras docentur”. Ibid., f. 5v.

⁴³ “Qui per gratiam Dei in Christo est iam reformatus ad eam formam quam antea utcumque explicavimus”. Ibid., f. 16r.

⁴⁴ “Quid faciet episcopus non satis exercitatus in litteris, qui numquam scholas, qui doctores et interpretantes alios non audierit?”. Ibid., f. 38r.

specifies that they have not talked indeed of the “uncultivated bishop”, but of that who has a “spiritual knowledge”, as well as “good will in feeding his people”.⁴⁵

Far from focusing on the concrete content of the ecclesiastical reformation, Pole lingers instead on the different interpretations of the concept. The peculiar coexistence of contrasting conceptions of and approaches to reform is reflected in the composition of *De reformatione*, which combines the forms of a catechism, a rhetorical pamphlet and a scriptural commentary. Similarly, the twofold division of the work expressly derives from the intention (which is declared from the very first page) of treating not only what pertains to customs – “the reformation of which is dealt with in many books” – but also the way of enunciating the Word. Even if somebody has written about the latter subject – Q. states in the opening sentences of *De reformatione* – “so far I have read nothing that fully satisfies me in this regard”.⁴⁶

The two conceptions of reform are placed by Pole in a hierarchy where doctrinal aspects figure prominently and constitute the “fundamentum” [foundation] of customs. Nobody can actually either speak of the reformation of customs, if he has not known the faith in Christ,⁴⁷ or discern the right “modus operandi” without understanding first “the doctrine of the principles of faith”.⁴⁸ Any work (“opus”) that is not derived “from the principles [...] of faith, hope and charity, which we declare in baptism”, is therefore not welcome to God.⁴⁹ Despite the significance attached to the doctrinal “fundamentum reformationis”, Pole acknowledges that the “populus” is much more concerned with the disciplinary aspects of the ecclesiastical reformation, to the point of almost identifying the reform itself with the restoration of the

⁴⁵ “Q. Tu nunc videris loqui de scriba docto, de homine docto, at noster sermo caepit esse ab ea interrogatione: “Quid faciet episcopus non satis exercitatus in litteris, qui numquam scholas, qui doctores et interpretantes alios non audierit, quo pacto hic Scripturas vel veteres vel novas interpretari possit, quas numquam didicit? R. [...]. Nos vero nunc, cum de episcopis expertibus scientiae litterarum loquimur, non de quovis rudi episcopo loquimur, sed de eo qui bonam voluntatem affert ad pascendum populum, ut fungatur officio suo, qui non ita rudis ut litteras prorsus nesciat, sed ut ita doctus quae verba sonant saltem intelligat”. Ibid., f. 38r.

⁴⁶ “Hoc abs te nunc peto: ut de modo reformandi ministros verbi Dei sententiam tuam exponas, non solum in ea parte quae ad mores pertinet, de quorum reformatione multi libri sunt referti, quam de modo enunciandi et tractandi verbi, de quo et si aliqui scripsere, nihil tamen adhuc ipse legi quod mihi in ea parte plene satisfaceret”. Ibid., f. 1r.

⁴⁷ “Nemine recte et ordine de reformandis moribus disserere posse qui non simul de his tribus caelestibus virtutibus disserat, quia vero nec morum deformitas qualis sit, nec quid mores corrumpat satis quisquam perspicere poterit nisi primum qualis sit fides nostra perspexerit, et quid sit quod eam corrumpat. Hinc est quod de moribus formandis nemo recte loqui potest qui fidem in Christum non recte cognoverit”. Ibid., f. 15r.

⁴⁸ “Nec enim modus operandi recte percipi poterit – quae, ut ante dixi, est doctrina laboris – nisi quo omnis labor, id est quies nostra, quae ostenditur in doctrina principiorum fidei bene intelligatur”. Ibid., f. 10r. Cf. f. 22r.

⁴⁹ “Ex principii [...] fidei, spei et dilectionis, quam in baptismo profiteamur”. Ibid., f. 9v.

ancient customs of the apostolic age.⁵⁰ The second part of *De reformatione* is thus devoted to the “reformation of customs” [“reformatio moribus”], that is to say the approach of “changing men by religion”, as it was epitomised by Giles of Viterbo, in his inaugural speech at the Fifth Lateran Council.⁵¹ In Pole’s treatise, there is a long discussion about the responsibility for the Church’s *deformatio*: whereas Q. maintains that the princes and the clergy are the first that need to be reformed, R. repeatedly accuses the “populus” of being the “root” and the “author [...] of the whole deformation of the Church”, precisely because they transfer the guilt of their sins to the rulers, while neglecting to do their own duty.⁵² Thus the fact that the *populus* “do not want to move a foot forward unless priests proceed first” clearly reveals that they actually do not want a reformation, although they demand it very loudly.⁵³ Such hypocrisy constitutes therefore the real source “of all evils” [“omnium malorum”],⁵⁴ which the *populus* could obviate if only they started to put a very simple evangelical precept into practice, namely to do to others whatever we would like them to do to us.⁵⁵ This precept, which contains “the sum of the law and prophets” [“legis summam et prophetarum”] and is “almost implanted in our souls” [“tanquam insitum in animis nostris”],⁵⁶ would consequently constitute “not just [...] the principle, but even the means and the end of the reform itself”.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ “Q. Num igitur totum opus reformationis terminis fidei, spei et charitatis concludis? In iis quidem positum esse fundamentum reformationis nemo negare poterit, sed populus, et qui de hac re loquentes tamdiu negotium reformationis di[f]ferri conqueruntur, non tam de fide, spe et dilectione nostra quam de moribus conqueruntur, in quibus deformationis nostrae vis maxime apparet, hanc deformatio necesse tolli, et antiquos mores restitui cupiunt, de quibus si de reformatione disserens dicere praetermitteres, quam vis totam doctrinam explicares, nihil adhuc te de ea locutum existimarent. Qui vero de conformandis moribus ad antiquorum exemplum eorum qui hac fide, spe et dilectione praestiterunt, loquuntur, etiam si nihil de fide, nihil de spe et dilectione nostra dicant, hos de reformatione recte disseruisse existimant”. Ibid., f. 15r.

⁵¹ See above, p. 24, note 53.

⁵² “Auctor [...] totius deformationis Ecclesiae”. BNN, MS. IX.A.14, ff. 15v, 16v.

⁵³ “Ne pedem quidem movere velit nisi sacerdos progrediantur”. Ibid., f. 23r; cf. ff. 21v-22r.

⁵⁴ Ibid., f. 18r; cf. f. 18v.

⁵⁵ Ibid., f. 20r; cf. 24r.

⁵⁶ “Omnia quaecumque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, haec illis facite; hinc enim lex et prophetae” (*Mt.* 7, 12). Ibid., f. 24r.

⁵⁷ “Non tantum [...] principium, sed etiam medium et pene finis ipsius reformationis”. Ibid., f. 21v.

3.2. Reforming “Men by Religion”

Pole’s interpretation of the principle of reforming *homines per sacra* apparently leads here to the humanistic formulation of an ethic Christianity, inspired by the will to eradicate the arid formalism of Scholastic theology from the pure and simple kernel of the evangelical message. The emphasis on the exemplary significance of Christ’s life, as well as on the recovery of the moral core of Christianity, was a distinctive features of the religious vision shared by the group of scholars and prelates with whom Pole, after his return to Italy in 1532, had undertaken a new intellectual and spiritual itinerary. This varied group, whose most eminent and influential representative was Gasparo Contarini, was susceptible to the need for an urgent reform of the Church, in order to heal also the rift with the Protestant constellation. These people were generally ready to accept some of the requests made by the Protestant reformers, whose works were well known and circulated widely among the humanist literary circles and the monastic centres around Venice, where Pole had settled on the occasion of his second Italian stay. Within this lively and stimulating cultural environment, the Protestant appeal for the revival of the evangelical freedom – with the resulting critique of the clergy’s corruptions and the superstitious religious practices – had immediately found a receptive sympathetic audience who was already accustomed, in Erasmus’s wake, to value the revivification of the evangelical purity and simplicity, rather than inessential doctrinal subtleties. In a letter written from Liège on 10 June 1537, at the end of his legatine mission in the Low Countries, Pole confessed therefore to Contarini his hope that the pope’s attempt at the moral renewal of the Church would significantly diminish the importance of any other source of controversy with the Protestants, thus contributing to restore peace “in the Christian provinces”.⁵⁸

The paramountcy of the moral dimension, as opposed to doctrinal definitions, was peculiar to the conception of religious reform which Pole shared with the heterogeneous group who worked with him in the first commission for Church reform, between 1536 and 1537. As was explained earlier, the conviction that “life” counted more than doctrine in Christian life was a widespread tenet in the humanistic culture of that time.⁵⁹ This finds

⁵⁸ Pole, *Epistolae*, II, p. 68. See below, p. 76 and note 70.

⁵⁹ See above, pp. 26-27. Cf. Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 82.

further evidence in a passage from Contarini's biography, written by Ludovico Beccadelli. According to Beccadelli, Contarini had strongly supported the men whom Paul III had decided to appoint as new cardinals. The reason for his enthusiastic endorsement – Contarini used to say – lay in the strong belief that, “if His Holiness wanted to make the Church beautiful, it was not necessary to write other laws, for there existed already enough, but rather to make living books, capable of making those laws speak: and this meant to appoint new cardinals and bishops who had reverence for God and were learned; in this way His Holiness would see the reform proceed without difficulty”.⁶⁰ The same “living books” [“vivi libri”] had been mentioned by Pole, in his *De unitate Ecclesiae*, as the supreme testimony of God's will and of the evangelical values: in this kind of works, as well as in those “written with the martyrs' blood” [“sanguine martyrum [...] scripti”], the Church could learn more than in any other handwritten book.⁶¹

Pole's view constitutes evidence that he regarded strict doctrinal definitions to be substantially *adiaphora*, that is to say indifferent matters of marginal importance for the Christians. As a consequence, these questions did not represent an insurmountable obstacle to the attempt at reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. The relevance of these matters, therefore, was not such as to justify a wide public debate, which might risk exacerbating the tensions between the two opposite sides by involving people who could not quite understand such complex issues. In this perspective, the category of *adiaphora* maintained very fluid boundaries, which lent themselves to a virtually indefinite extension, to the detriment of the sphere of *fundamentalia fidei*. These in turn were such intricate awkward and obscure abstractions that could not be examined but by very few wise men. The programmatic recourse to the concept of *adiaphoria* had become in this way one of the privileged methods of Erasmus's proposal for religious renewal, which had been taken up by some members of the Roman curia. For at least a decade (until the Colloquy of Regensburg in 1541), these people tried to heal the rift in the Western Christendom, in the belief that they

⁶⁰ “Se Sua Santità voleva far bella la Chiesa, non accadeva più scriver leggi, che assai già ne erano fatte, ma che facesse de' libri vivi, i quai quelle leggi fariano parlare et render frutto: et questo era fare cardinali et vescovi che havessero il timore di Dio et fussero dotti, ché a questo modo Sua Santità vedrebbe le riforma andar innanzi et senza fatica”. Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 27-28.

⁶¹ Pole, *De unitate*, p. XCVI r.

agreed with the Protestants on the few substantial questions of faith, while the theological matter of the conflict might be reformulated by glossing over the marginal disagreements.

The first failed summons of the Council in Mantua, issued by Paul III on 2 June 1536 with the bull *Ad dominici gregis*, revived the hopes of those who were striving for reconciliation. Among them was the Benedictine abbot Isidoro (alias Taddeo) Cucchi of Chiari, whom had been sent to Rome, together with the abbot Gregorio Cortese, to follow the election of Clement VII's successor. Between 1536 and 1537, when Pole was involved in the commission for Church reform and attended to the writing of *De unitate Ecclesiae*, the Benedictine Isidoro wrote to the Protestants an *Exhortation to Concord* (*Adhortatio ad concordiam*), in which he took up the main features of the Erasmian proposal for compromise. At the very moment when the religious colloquies promised to have positive outcomes, the work was dedicated (not without reason) to cardinal Contarini, who wished it was published in Germany, as a demonstration of the openness to agreement on the Catholic side.⁶² The Benedictine abbot assured his interlocutors abroad that he did not intend to examine whether the ideas they sustained were right or wrong; he was certain, however, that these doctrines were not so important as to be worth discussing publicly, thus posing a “manifest danger of sedition” [“cum manifesto seditionis maximae periculo”]. Had the opinions of the Protestant reformers been transmitted imprudently to the multitude, they would risk bringing forth “tumults and disagreements” [“tumultus et dissidia”], owing to, if

⁶² In 1538 Giovanni Morone, who was then nuncio in Germany, gave the manuscript of this work (*Ad eos qui a communi Ecclesiae sententia discessere adhortatio ad concordiam*) to the Catholic theologian Johann Cochlaeus, in order to have it published. The theologian, however, refused to issue it, since he was afraid that the author's distinction between a level of truth reserved for the learned – who could freely deal with the most awkward theological issues, and another reserved for the common people might prove dangerous. Only diplomatic reasons induced Contarini to eventually endorse Cochlaeus's position against the publication of the book (“in supprimendo eleganti et docto opusculo monachi Isidori”). According to the Venetian cardinal, this work might have provided the Protestants with “reasons for reproaching” (“ansam maledicendi”). In this respect, it must be noted that the final document of the commission for reform, in which Pole had taken part (*Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia*), had already been published in Germany, without pontifical authorisation. This document had been read by the Protestants as an admission of the Church's guilt by its very representatives. For the very purpose of warding off such reactions, the Vatican hierarchies had vainly tried to keep this document secret. Contarini's letter to Cochlaeus is published in Dittrich, *Regesten und Briefe*, pp. 296-297. In 1540, the new political situation made it possible to publish the *Adhortatio*, which was printed for the first time in Milan, shortly after the imperial summons of the religious colloquies in Worms. Subsequently, in 1545, the book was published in Paris. See Marco Cavarzere's introduction to Isidoro da Chiari, *Adhortatio ad concordiam*, edizione, traduzione e commento a cura di Marco Cavarzere, prefazione di Adriano Prosperi (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2008), pp. XXXI-XXXVII; Collett, *Italian Benedictine Scholars*, p. 102 nota 1; Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, pp. 44-45, 81-83.

nothing else, their character of newness, which might upset the uncultivated people. "If anything salutiferous has been dreamt up by you, this should not been disclosed to the people", the Benedictine suggested. "One should instead reflect at length and carefully, with few others, on the stratagems by which what you have recently dreamt up can become customary among the people, preserving their peace and concord".⁶³ Thus the *Adhortatio* too echoed the constant call for a sense of appropriateness that, like in many works of Erasmus, led to an implicit legitimisation of secretive behaviour towards common and uncultivated people.⁶⁴ As a result, the Protestant reformers were invited to consider, first of all, "to whom, in whose presence and in which way one should speak".⁶⁵

Among the reformers towards whom Isidoro was more favourably inclined figured Martin Bucer. In his commentary on the Psalms, published in Strasbourg in 1529, Bucer had advocated the concord between Protestants and Catholics, whose divisions depended largely on formal disagreements, rather than on substantial dissensions.⁶⁶ The highest praise of Isidoro, though, was reserved for Philipp Melanchton, the interlocutor on whom cardinal Contarini relied more among the Protestant reformers. "If the leaders of your factions learned to imitate the prudence of this man [...] – the Benedictine abbot stated –, we would have a way more peaceful Christian republic".⁶⁷

In 1535 Melanchton had published the second revised edition of his *Loci communes*, which had aroused criticism from other reformers. Some exponents of the Catholic Church, on the contrary, had hailed the moderation of this work (especially when dealing with awkward questions such as free will and justification) as a sign that an agreement with the Protestants was possible. The author of the *Adhortatio* therefore honoured Melanchton's alleged change from his juvenile passionate temper to a more sober style. According to Isidoro, Melanchton was also ready to submit his own views to the judgement of the Church and of the "optimi". Evidently, the real intentions of Melanchton had been misinterpreted by

⁶³ "Siquid communi hominum generi salutiferum excogitavissetis, non continuo in vulgus prodere", "sed cum paucis diu multumque deliberare quibus artibus, salva populorum pace atque concordia, haec a vobis recens excogitata sensim in hominum venirent consuetudinem". Isidoro da Chiari, *Adhortatio*, pp. 28, 14; cf. pp. 11-28.

⁶⁴ The line of reasoning drew on usual scriptural examples from the works of the Fathers (in this case the main source was Gregory of Nazianzus. See *ibid.*, pp. 16-22, and Cavarzere's *Introduzione*, pp. XXII-XXVIII.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. XXI-XXII.

⁶⁷ "Huius viri si prudentiam modumque vestrarum partium duces imitari didicissent [...], longe pacatiorem christianam rempublicam haberemus". *Ibid.*, p. 24.

the Benedictine. Nevertheless, Isidoro's positions was shared by other prelates, not least because it was underpinned by many diplomatic dispatches that described Melanchton as a quiet thoughtful scholar, who might easily convert to the Catholic cause.⁶⁸ In a letter to the Venetian patriarch Girolamo Querini (written in the same period when Isidoro of Chiari composed his *Adhortatio*), cardinal Contarini declared that he had read some of Melanchton's writings. In his opinion, these works were "much closer than previously [...] to the Catholic view" ["longe magis quam principio [...] ad catholicum sensum"] on the questions "of grace and free will, to which also pertains all that dispute over the predestination of saints and the damnation of the evil".⁶⁹ In the same year, on 10 June, Reginald Pole wrote to Contarini that he had also read "very eagerly" Melanchton's articles, which the Venetian colleague had given to him. Precisely this reading had raised his hope that the controversies with the Protestant were not such as to prevent all the Christian lands' return "to the profession of one faith in charity".⁷⁰

The portrait of the young Pole as a man who was favourably disposed towards the Protestants, as well as willing to accept some of their proposals, seems corroborated by another work of the same years: a treatise of political theory, which was written by Thomas Starkey between 1529 and 1532 (and revised in 1535). Starkey articulated his programme of political reforms through a fictitious dialogue – maybe inspired by a real conversation that took place in the abbey of Bisham – between the two friends Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset.⁷¹ Starkey's Pole declared that he was favourable to the adoption of vernacular in

⁶⁸ See *ibid.*, pp. 22-25 and Cavarzere's *Introduzione*, pp. XVIII-XXI.

⁶⁹ "De gratia et libero arbitrio, cui annexa est etiam tota ea disputatio de praedestinatione sanctorum et de reprobatione malorum". Dittrich, *Regesten und Briefe*, p. 289; cf. pp. 288-290.

⁷⁰ "Valde [...] animum meum exhilarasti, et non minus in illis Philippi Melanchtonis capitulis quibus tuam sententiam adiunxisti, quae libentissime, docta et pia tua censura examinata, legi; et in maximam spem veni, pontifice perseverante in censura morum, in caeteris non ita magnam futuram controversiam ut non facile ad professionem unius fidei in charitate omnes provinciae consentiant". Pole, *Epistolae*, II, p. 68. See above, p. 72 and note 58.

⁷¹ This work was not printed until 1878, when Joseph Meadows Cowper published in the second part of the volume of Sidney J. Herrtage (ed.), *England in the Reign of King Henry VIII* (London: N. Trübner & Co., 1878). In 1948 Kathleen Burton produced a second edition with modernised spelling (*A Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset, by Thomas Starkey*, with a preface by E. M. W. Tillyard, London: Chatto and Windus, 1948). The most recent edition is the diplomatic one by Thomas Mayer: *A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society-University College, 1989). I will quote from this edition, although the transcription criteria make it difficult to read the text. An analysis of this work can be found in Geoffrey R. Elton, 'Reform by Statute: Thomas Starkey's "Dialogue" and Thomas Cromwell's Policy', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 54 (1968), pp. 165-188, now published in Geoffrey R. Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974-1992), II, pp.

religious functions. He also prevented his interlocutor's predictable objections by specifying that he did not mean to follow "the steps of Luther", whose judgement was poor. Nonetheless, he did not regard Luther and his followers as so impious, unwise and irresponsible as to always be in the wrong: "Heretykys be not in all thyngys heretykys", Pole boldly concluded.⁷² It is neither possible nor fruitful to examine whether the young Pole ever uttered the words of the *Dialogue*. One can reasonably affirm, however, that they reflect Pole's positions at that date.⁷³ The work had indeed been conceived by Thomas Starkey as a kind of political manifesto, for the purpose of persuading his friend and patron Pole to accept the public office which had been offered to him at the Royal court.⁷⁴ As a consequence, Starkey would hardly relate opinions that were alien to Pole and that might embarrass him. Moreover, the attitude which the fictitious Pole of the *Dialogue* displayed towards the heretics is plausible because it denotes the peculiar distinction between the "good" and the "venomous", which was shared by the group of people with whom Pole was in contact during his Italian stay.⁷⁵

There is evidence that, at least until the composition of *De unitate Ecclesiae*, Pole proved to be sympathetic especially towards the requests for moral reform of the Church made by the Protestants. This stance was inspired by the belief that the recovery of the ethic kernel of Christianity must be given the highest priority, while doctrinal issues played a negligible role. In his view, even the questions on which his cousin Henry VIII had asked him to speak out were part of the residual category of *adiaphora*. A short memorandum by Thomas Starkey, dated 12 January 1537, is particularly telling in this regard. In the few lines of this document, which was added at the bottom of the threatening letter which Starkey had written to Pole in

236-258.

⁷² "You are mesemyth aferd lest we schold folow the steppys of the lutheranys, wych are fallen in to many errorys and gret confusyon [...]; but here, mastur Lup[set], fyrst you schal be sure of thys: I wyl not folow the steppys of Luther, whose jugement I estyme veray lytyl. And yet he and hys dyscypullys be not so wykkyd and folysch that in al thyngys they erre: heretykys be not in all thyngys heretykys. Wherfor I wyl not so abhorre theyr heresy that for the hate thereof I wyl fly from the truth. I alow thys maner of saying of servyce not bycause they say and affyrme hyt to be gud and laudabul, but bycause the truth ys so as hyt apperyth to me [...]. The dyvyne servyce was ordeynyd to be sayd in the Church for the edyfing of the pepul, that they, heryng the wordys of the gospel and the exampullys of holy sayntys, professorys of Chrystys name and doctryne, myght therby be sterryd and movyd to folow theyr steppys [...]. You can not deny thys folowyth of necessity, that we must other have the dyvyne servyse to be sayd in our owne tong commynly orels". Thomas Starkey, *A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset*, p. 90.

⁷³ See Joseph Meadows Cowper's preface to the *Dialogue between Reginald Pole and Thomas Lupset*, in *England in the Reign of King Henry VIII*, pp. cxx-cxxv.

⁷⁴ See Thomas F. Mayer, 'Faction and Ideology: Thomas Starkey's "Dialogue"', *The Historical Journal*, 28 (1985), pp. 1-25, in particular pp. 2, 17-18.

⁷⁵ See above, p. 19, note 34.

the summer of 1536,⁷⁶ the English officer noted down an account given by Henry Cole in the presence of Richard Morison, a former fellow student of Pole and Starkey in Padua. Henry Cole had been instead Pole's collaborator during the composition of *De unitate*.⁷⁷ In the early stages of his work – Cole maintained – Pole had confided that “he regarded the authority of the pontiff as a human order and an indifferent matter [*adiaphora*]”, although subsequently he had changed his mind and had resolved to defend, with his writing, the truth which the Holy Spirit had disclosed to him.⁷⁸

3.3. *Human Dignity and Perennial Revelation from De unitate to De reformatione*

As regards the fundamental importance attached to the moral dimension in Christian life, there is undoubtedly a certain continuity between Pole's positions at the time of *De unitate* and those expressed in *De reformatione*, in particular in the versions that were meant for the press (7a, 8, 9a, 11). In the latter treatise, the discourse on the reformation of customs occupies the second part, which is indeed, in all manuscript versions, the longest section of the work. As was shown earlier on, Pole states that the people themselves [*populus*] might start to correct the deformation of the Church if they only obeyed a few evangelical moral principles, such as “to respect and honour one's parents; to obey rulers; never do anybody any harm with words or deeds”. In sum, their behaviour should conform to the “*summa* of Christ's doctrine”, that is to say “doing to others what one would like to have done to oneself, and not doing to others what one does not want for oneself”.⁷⁹ The moral precept which the *populus*

⁷⁶ The letter is published in *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, I/2, pp. 282-295 (cf. above, Introduction, 2, p. 22, note 80).

⁷⁷ Henry Cole would later become Pole's vicar general during the legatine mission to restore Catholicism in Mary Tudor's England. See Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, I, p. 113.

⁷⁸ “Colleus, presens cum Polo cum scripsit librum, confessus est mihi, coram Morisono, se audivisse sepius ab eo quam, eo tempore cum primum scribere cepit iussus a rege, auctoritatem pontificis pro constitutione humana et pro adiaphora habuit”. Ibid., p. 113, note 127. Cf. *Letters and Papers*, XI, n. 402.3.

⁷⁹ “Disce primum parentes tuos observare et colere; magistratibus parere; neminem unquam neque re neque verbo violare; omnibus semper pro tua virili parte prodesse. In summa, illud disce et in hoc primum tuam fidem et pietatem in eum et erga eius doctrinam studium ostende: ut quaecumque tibi velis fieri, haec aliis facias, et ne quid alteri facias quod tibi nolis fieri. Haec enim est summa earum quae doctrina Christi continet, quam si animo amplectaris et profiteare, et moribus ac vitae sanctitate exprimas, ne dubita quin hic caelestis magister mysteria suae sapientiae recondita tibi sit aperturus. Haec ergo sunt quae ut omnium piorum et salutarem sapientiam sitientium animos erigere ac consolari potent”. BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 32r.

should follow contains, according to Pole, all the teachings of the so-called “domestic preceptor” [“praeceptor domesticus”]: this is the “spiritum Dei”, given to everyone by divine Providence and acting as an internal teacher. Even all efforts of the princes and the ecumenical council to reform the Church would be useless, if not preceded by compliance with the “inner master’s warnings”,⁸⁰ as well as with the “knowledge of the Word”.⁸¹ These suffice to help everyone conduct himself with honesty and holiness, even if deprived of all pastors.⁸²

The anthropological conception that underpins these assertions closely resembles the one that emerges from *De unitate*, where Pole had described human reason as the receptacle of a “tiny spark of God’s light” [“minima scintilla divini luminis”]. As such, reason retains the vestige of God’s power and splendour; when guided by the light of his spirit, therefore, it can certainly master human affairs.⁸³ By virtue of this, every man is able to comprehend and consciously accept the gift of eternal salvation, which the divine mercy has offered to him. The ineliminable corruption of human nature has never prevented man preserving a genuine moral sense, which recognises the truth and compulsoriness of some “natural dogmas”, such as “the duty to honour one’s parents and not to do to other what one does not want for oneself”. Despite continuous errors and deviations, man spontaneously tends to observe these natural dogmas, which are reflected in the precepts of the Church.⁸⁴ He possesses, in fact, a “natural faith” that “is acquired through exterior testimony or sign”.⁸⁵ This faith “always brings forth the knowledge of our helplessness and feebleness, filling the soul with beneficial confidence and with the hope we can obtain, through God’s mercy, what we expect”.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ “Interioris magistri monita”. Ibid., ff. 23v, 24r.

⁸¹ “Aliis autem maior, aliis minor inest scientia verbi, idque ex singulari Dei dono, qui dona sua singulis distribuit ut vult et ut cuique magis expedit”. Ibid., f. 20r.

⁸² “Suppeditat enim divina Providentia unicuique domi suae verbum, quantum ad vitam honestissime sanctissimeque traducendam satis est ut, quamvis populus omni cum pastorum destitutus sit, tamen tuto et salutariter pietatem suam alere ac sustentare possit”. Ibid., f. 19v.

⁸³ “Ratio est data [to the human soul], minima scintilla divini luminis, quod sane vero et naturale lumen animi est, ut sol omnibus quae sensu sunt praedicta [... Intelligis] rationem, si suum ducem spiritum Dei, lumen divinum praeferentem, maxime posse in rebus humanis”. Pole, *De unitate*, p. CXXIVv.

⁸⁴ “Si leges naturae stant, si nunquam tam corrupta natura fuit ut non hunc sensum verum habuerit honorandum esse Deum, honorandos parentes, alteri non esse faciendum quod sibi quis nolit fieri, quae omnia sunt dogmata naturae a quibus, etsi homines improbitate sua saepe discedant, manet tamen hic sensus veritatis in natura; quanto magis in Ecclesiae preceptis”. Ibid., p. CXXXIIv.

⁸⁵ “[Fides] quae ab externa aliqua voce aut signo colligitur”. Ibid., p. CXXVIIr.

⁸⁶ “Imaginem [of the true faith] autem appello illam fidem quam a natura habemus, quae semper affert secum cognitionem impotentiae et imbecillitatis nostrae, implet vero animum salubri fiducia ac spe nos per Dei

Nevertheless, only by means of the “true faith” (“which we define as faith of Christ and as catholic”), can we acknowledge our ineptitude and, “through Christ, be incorporated in and relying upon him”, as well as penetrate the divine mysteries.⁸⁷

The close similarity between these passages from *De unitate* and the aforementioned sections of *De reformatione* extends to some gnoseological and doctrinal statements that appear in both works. In the former, the two different kinds of faith (the “natural” and the “true” faith) correspond to two distinct ways of attaining knowledge: “through nature” [“per viam naturae”] and “through God’s spirit” [“per spiritum Dei”]. The faith through God’s spirit, in particular, “has never been extinct in the human species, so that some spark of it has remained.”⁸⁸ In *De reformatione*, Pole states that even the pagans could know, by means of the “wonderful appearance of natural things”, that there existed one most wise God.⁸⁹ This type of knowledge, which is attainable through “the book of heaven and heart”,⁹⁰ does not compare, however, with the cognition derived from “the holy master that speaks from within”,⁹¹ that is to say the spirit of God and of Christ. This is the one and only authentic master that ever existed, for he has always taught his divine wisdom both to the pagans and to the Jews.⁹²

Pole’s parallel between the constant presence of the divine element within the inner being of man and the perennial presence of God in human history reveals a clear echo of the most recurrent themes in Florentine Neoplatonism. On the one hand, from the works of

benignitatem consequi posse quod expectamus”. Ibid., p. CXXVIIIr.

⁸⁷ “Tale enim est quam nos fidem Christi ac catholicam appellamus [...]. Ad illam enim fidem qua Deo per Christum toti initimur ac fidimus... quam qui adipiscant, utcunque miseri ante fuerint, in beatorum numerum statim referuntur, ad eam, inquam, fidem per quam solam ingressus ad mysteria divina cognoscenda datur”. Ibid., pp. CXXVIIr, CXXVIIv.

⁸⁸ “Hoc vero genus cognitionis per spiritum Dei nunquam in humano genere sic fuit extinctum ut non aliqua eius scintilla maneret”. Ibid., p. CXXVIIv.

⁸⁹ “Num vero existimas gentibus unquam defugisse praeceptores qui hoc idem monerent docerentque, qui ad caelum oculos tollere atque ex hoc pulcherrimo et admirabili rerum naturalium aspectu intelligere iuberent unum esse omnium patrem et sapientissimum, et infinita postea praeditum, qui omnia in lucem produxerit, et in hunc mirabilem ordinem quem videmus digesserit?”. BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 28v.

⁹⁰ “In libro caeli et terrae”. Ibid., f. 29v. Cf. f. 30r.

⁹¹ “Ex iis autem quae hactenus dicta sunt opinor concludere possumus iudaeos pariter et caeteras gentes quoties doctrina aliqua sancta a suis hypodidascalis instituerentur eatenus ad eam percipiendam idoneos fuisse quatenus a sancto illo magistro intus loquente elementa prima prius didicissent, quo prorsus cessante et nihil docente, frustra Moyses et prophetae iudaeos, / frustra philosophi vel poetae vel hierophantae gentes semper docuissent”. Ibid., ff. 28v-29r.

⁹² “Q. An igitur impiarum gentium quemadmodum iudaeorum magistros unius communis magistri discipulos atque hypodidascalis fuisse dicis, qui Deum omnium patrem ex fabrica mundi agnoscerent, eundem autem ipsum Dei Dei spiritum, ipsum Christi spiritum, qui est sapientia Patris, verum et unicum magistrum omnium semper et ubique fuisse affirmas?”. Ibid. f. 29r.

philosophers such as Giannozzo Manetti (*De dignitate et excellentia hominis*) and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (*Oratio de dignitate hominis*), Pole drew the typically humanistic concept of human dignity, which had often found expression in a glorification of man's divine features. On the other hand, Pole's affirmation that God's spirit has always spoken to mankind, even before the coming of Christ, seems inspired by the hermetic themes of the perennial divine revelation and the continuities of the sacred mysteries. These motifs had run through the works of many Florentine humanists of the XIV and XV centuries, such as Coluccio Salutati and Giannozzo Manetti, but had become well-known after the systematisation of Marsilio Ficino's *Della religione cristiana* and *Theologia platonica* (1474), as well as in Pico's writings. According to Ficinus, the truth of Christianity has showed itself through a progressive revelation, which permeated the thought of ancient philosophers too.⁹³ In *De reformatione*, Pole in turn has no doubt that, if pagan philosophers "wrote anything pious and irreproachable, they certainly heard it from the holy spirit".⁹⁴ "There has never existed any time – Pole explains – when Christ did not speak with mankind by sliding into the souls in spirit",⁹⁵ despite the fact that he appeared on earth for a short period of time, "he was always present in spirit [...], not only for the Jews, but also for all the other people".⁹⁶ By means of this "common preceptor", Christ taught them the *summa* of his doctrine even before he came in the flesh.⁹⁷

⁹³ Cf. Eugenio Garin, 'Problemi di religione e filosofia nella cultura fiorentina del Quattrocento', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 14, 1 (1952), pp. 70-82.

⁹⁴ "Quicquid rectum et pium vel scriptis vel voce tradiderunt, a spiritu sancto ipsos audivisse non dubito". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 29r.

⁹⁵ "Nullum enim tempus notari potest quo Christus cum humano genere non sit locutus, sese in animos spiritu insinuans". Ibid., f. 27v.

⁹⁶ "Adfuit vero Christus, seque oculis videndum prae-buit, brevi temporis spatio, qui semper in spiritu praesens et praesto fuerat non solum iudaeis, sed etiam caeteris omnibus gentibus". Ibid.

⁹⁷ "Christus, antequam in carne veniret, summam doctrinae suae gentes etiam docuit, quemadmodum iudaeos". Ibid., p. 28r. Cf. ibid.: "Communem vero praeceptorem hunc spiritum fuisse tum caeteris gentibus quam iudaeis, id maxime declarat, quod Christus, in carne veniens, eam doctrinae suae summam explicavit quae universo hominum generi pariter convenit".

3.4. *Doctrinal Ambiguities in De reformatione*

Pole goes as far as to state that, by virtue of the “domestic preceptor” (that is to say the holy spirit), the people will never lack a moral guidance, even when priests – “who are exterior teachers – perform their duty less diligently, as is often the case”.⁹⁸ Without the “common master”, no prophet, poet, philosopher or teacher would manage to inculcate the divine doctrine.⁹⁹ This is why the universal moral precept, instilled by the divine spirit in every individual, is described by Pole as “not just [...] the principle, but even the means and the end of the reform itself”.¹⁰⁰ The people’s failure to follow this simple precept makes them, if not the very guilty party, at least accomplices to the moral decay of the ecclesiastical institution. Nonetheless, Pole’s accusation against the *populus* (which remains a vague and undefined category) sounds very much like a pretext under which he ends up depriving the sacerdotal office, and therefore the Church as a visible institution, of all meaning. Thus Pole’s marked spiritualism, which characterises his exhortation to the establishment of a “domestic discipline”, points in some versions of *De reformatione* towards remarkable ecclesiological consequences that are significantly omitted in later rewrites. As an example, the passage where Pole belittles the importance of the clergy, in favour of the moral guidance of the domestic preceptor, is still present in version n. 8 (BNN), but is lacking in n. 11 (ACDF).¹⁰¹

It must be noted that these radical developments of Pole’s typically humanistic “moral” approach to Church reformation are grounded on a substantial theological basis, which was absent both from *De unitate* and from the works of other humanists (like Erasmus) that voiced similar aspirations. Although claiming that the people themselves should undertake the reform

⁹⁸ “Scito igitur populum doctore nunquam caruisse, atque adeo magistrum optimum et sanctissimum ei semper adfuisse [...]. Hoc autem divina et paterna Dei Providentia esse factum ut, siquando sacerdotes – qui sunt externi magistri – minus diligenter officio suo fungerentur (ut saepe fit), populo, tanquam filio in domo patris sui, assiduus admonitor et doctor officii erga homines et pietatis erga Deum non deesset”. Ibid., f. 23r.

⁹⁹ “Unum etiam communem magistrum utrique ipsum spiritum sanctum dubitare sane non debemus, praesertim cum hoc conste[t] a quocumque hominum hunc magistrum subtraxeris, frustra omnes hypodidascalos suam doctrinam in illius aures infundere [...]. Ex iis autem quae hactenus dicta sunt opinor concludere possumus iudaeos pariter et caeterus gentes quoties doctrina aliqua sancta a suis hypodidascalis instituerentur eatenus ad eam percipiendam idoneos fuisse quatenus a sancto illo magistro intus loquente elementa prima prius didicissent, quo prorsus cessante et nihil docente, frustra Moyses et prophetae iudaeos, frustra philosophi vel poetae vel hierophantae gentes semper docuissent”. Ibid., ff. 28v-29r.

¹⁰⁰ “Non tantum [...] principium, sed etiam medium et pene finis ipsius reformationis”. Ibid., f. 21v. See above, p. 71, note 57.

¹⁰¹ Cf. ACDF, *Stanza storica*, E-6 a, fasc. 2, f. 40v.

by implementing the evangelical precept of the divine spirit, in the first pages of *De reformatione* Pole clearly places the two main conceptions of reform in a hierarchy where doctrinal aspects figure prominently and constitute the “fundamentum” of customs.¹⁰² The radical doctrinal positions that are expressed in the first versions of *De reformatione*, while gradually disappearing from the subsequent ones, parallel to a large extent the similar assertions of another manuscript work of Pole, which dates from the same years of the earliest fragmentary versions of *De reformatione*. This piece of writing was conceived as a free meditation, in the form of a commentary on some Psalms, concerning the doctrinal issues of justification and the relationship between faith and works in order to salvation. By virtue of the very limited circulation of the writing, which was intended only for Pole's small group of friends and never published, the author's treatment appears to be unusually free from the self-censorship he so frequently imposed on other works (including *De reformatione*). Thus the commentaries on the Psalms allow to perceive a clear mark of the ideas expounded in Juan de Valdés's writings, which were read, discussed and often spread all over Italy by the circle of Viterbo *spirituali*.

Similar reference to Valdés can be also found in the earliest versions of *De reformatione* (which were destined, in all likelihood, for the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*), as well as in the intermediate stages of the work, namely in the manuscripts that were initially meant for the press (7a, 8 and 9a). In some cases, Pole literally paraphrases some of Valdés's statements. When he expounds on the attainment of divine wisdom through the “book of Jesus Christ's cross” [“liber crucis Iesu Christi”],¹⁰³ as opposed to the “book of heaven and heart”, he warns against reading it by relying exclusively on one's own intelligence [*ingenio*]. Unless one reads it instead by the light of the true and only master (i.e. the holy spirit), one would not be able to find anything pertaining to wisdom; on the contrary, everything will appear absurd, ridiculous and opposed to wisdom. The “book of the cross” has indeed both an interior and an exterior content: what emerges outwards is only “lamentation and woe”, whereas inside one can find but “pleasure and delight”.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, in one of his *Hundred and Ten Divine Considerations*

¹⁰² See above, pp. 70-71.

¹⁰³ BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 30v. Cf., f. 30r.

¹⁰⁴ “Et quisquis ingenio suo fretus illum legere aggreditur, ita omnibus tenebris circumfusa atque obscura iudicio rationis humanae inveniret quod ad sapientiam attinet ut, nisi magister lumen admoneat, nihil in eo sapientiae videre possit, imo omnia stulta, ridicula et sapientiae maxime contraria cogatur existimare. Hic vero liber ille est qui est scriptus intus et foris, sed ita ut foris nihil legas nisi lamentationes et vae [...]; contraque, nihil intus

(55), Juan de Valdés warns against the “carnal curocity” of those who want to “read the Scripture only to understand and comprehend”.¹⁰⁵ The pious Christian, instead, must only desire to receive the inner knowledge and feelings which God, by means of his holy spirit, will give him in his soul”.

In another controversial *considerazione* (63), Valdés compares the Scripture to “a candle in a gloomy place” and the holy spirit to the sun.¹⁰⁶ When the gloomy place is lit by the rays of the sun, the candle looks as though it had no longer light; consequently, it will be of no use to see what is in that place. Similarly, when the holy spirit enter man’s soul, he will no longer need the light of the Scripture to understand religious matters, for he is already illuminated by the sun-like light of the holy spirit that is in his soul. Nevertheless, he will not get rid of the Scripture, which can be useful to other people who are still in the gloomy place of their “human reason and prudence”. Furthermore, given that the Scripture was written by men who received the gift of the holy spirit in different measure, it is understood differently by various readers, according to the measure of holy spirit they received.¹⁰⁷ Pole himself, in *De*

scriptum reperias nisi veras voluptates et gaudia”. Ibid., f. 30v. Cf. f. 30r.

¹⁰⁵ “Al pio christiano appartiene essere molto vigilante et cauto in molte cose nelle quali può essere curiosità [...], et principalmente nello studio della santa Scrittura, acciò che la sincerità dello spirito che è in essa non si converta in curiosità di carne, come interviene alli curiosi, li quali legono la santa Scrittura solamente per sapere et per intendere; nella quale intendo che ’l pio christiano deve solamente pretendere li conoscimenti et li sentimenti interiori che Dio, per mezzo del suo spirito santo, li darà nell’anima [...], di maniera che, pigliando in mano un libro della santa Scrittura, pretenda intendere quello che è passato per lui”. Juan de Valdés, *Le cento et dieci divine considerationi del s. Giovanni Valdesso: nelle quali si ragiona delle cose più utili, più necessarie et più perfette della christiana professione*, in Basilea, 1550 (henceforward Valdés, *Considerationi*), pp. O5[r]-[O5v]. In his commentary on Matthew’s Gospel, Valdés also professes to be aware and proud that his own faith “does not depend on the Scripture, or is grounded in them, but rather depends on inspirations and experiences, on which is grounded” (“non dipenda da Scritture né stia fundata in quelle, ma che dipenda da ispirazioni e esperientie e stia fundata in quelle”). Juan de Valdés, *Lo evangelio di san Matteo*, Carlo Ossola (ed.) (Roma: Bulzoni, 1985; henceforward: Valdés, *Matteo*), p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ “La santa scrittura è come una candela in un luogo oscuro, et [...] lo spirito santo è come il sole”. Valdés, *Considerationi*, p. Q[1r]. Cf. pp. Q[1r]-[Q3v].

¹⁰⁷ “La quinta cosa che considero è che, sì come intrando li raggi del sole in un luogo oscuro, ove l’uomo si serve della luce de una candela, avviene che l’uomo vede più chiaramente/-te che innanzi tutte le cose che sono in quel loco, rimanendo la candela come senza luce et come senza splendore, di maniera che già l’uomo, volendo vedere le cose che sono in quel luogo, quello che guarda meno è la candela; così entrando lo spirito santo nell’animo dell’uomo che attende alla pietà, servendosi a ciò della santa Scrittura, avviene che l’uomo intende et conosce le cose di Dio et esso Dio più chiaramente che non faceva innanzi, restando la santa Scrittura, quanto a lui, come senza luce et senza splendore, di maniera che già esso, volendo intender le cose della pietà, et volendo conoscer Dio, quello che guarda meno è la santa Scrittura, attendendo a considerar con lo spirito santo, che sta nell’animo suo, et non con quello che è scritto in essa. Et però san Pietro lauda bene lo studio della santa Scrittura, ma mentre l’uomo sta nel luogo oscuro della prudentia et ragione humana, et vuole che questo studio duri in fino a tanto che la luce dello spirito santo risplenda nell’animo dell’uomo, intendendo che, venuta questa luce, l’uomo non ha più bisogno di cercar quella della Scrittura santa, la quale da sé stessa si diparte, sì / come si diparte la luce della candela, entrando li raggi del sole, et così come di diparti Moyse per la presentia di

reformatione, observes that the books of the Bible were written specifically for the *populus*, for

they were not very necessary for those who were instructed by the spirit and were taught by God. Indeed, Neither did Moses write for himself, nor did the prophets for the other prophets; those who possessed the bright light of the spirit wrote instead some kind of 'books for the memory' for the ones whose light was obscured.¹⁰⁸

Yet the correspondence between the positions of Valdés and those of Pole (as expressed in *De reformatione*) is not thorough, for the Valdesian features that shine through Pole's treatise coexist with an anthropological conception that is at odds with the one underpinning the works of the Spanish writer. As was shown before, both *De unitate* and the intermediate versions of *De reformatione* share the idea of the inborn presence of a divine element (the heavenly *magister*) within every man. An idea of this kind, though, was openly and repeatedly rejected by Valdés. In his thought, the illumination of the spirit assumed a peculiar soteriological value, for it is by no means an intensification of the inborn divine spark within man. After the original Fall, on the contrary, man has lost any vestige of God's image and is not able either to recognise or to fulfil any natural dogma. Only those who follow "human

Christo, et la legge per la presentia dell'Evangelio. La sesta cosa che considero è che, sì come l'huomo che gode la luce del sole, quando sapesse certo che quella non li potesse mancare, quantunque non getteria via la candela per lo beneficio riceputo, anzi la lasciarla, acciò che la servisse ad altri di quello che ha servito a lui, né però si servire di essa in quello che si serviva innanzi; così l'huomo che gode la luce dello spirito santo, sapendo certo che non li può mancare, benché non getta via la santa Scrittura, anzi la lascia, acciò che serva ad altri quello che ha servito a lui, non per tanto si serve di essa in quello che si serviva innanzi, secondo che già altre volte ho considerato. La settima cosa che considero è che, sì come non è di essentia del sole, quando entra nel luogo dove sta la candela, mostrare et scoprire tutto quello che in sé contiene la candela, così parimente non è di essentia dello spirito santo, quando entra nell'animo di colui il quale, applicato alla pietà, si serve della santa Scrittura, mostrare et scoprire tutti li se/-creti che stanno rinchiusi in essa, benché mostri et discopra di loro quella parte che Dio vuole che siano discoperti all'huomo al quale è dato lo spirito santo. Li doni dello spirito santo sono diversi; et essendo la santa Scrittura scritta da diverse persone, le quali ebbero differenti doni di spirito santo, et così scrissero differentemente, per conseguente è intesa dalle persone che hanno lo spirito santo da una in un'altra parte et da un'altra in un'altra, secondo che sono diversi li doni che li sono comunicati da Dio con lo spirito santo, per Giesù Cristo Nostro Signore". Ibid., Q2[r]-[Q3v].

¹⁰⁸ "R. Imo propter populum existimo et Genesim et caeteros libros scriptos fuisse, nec in iis qui docti erant spiritu, qui docti erant a Deo, libris scriptis multum opus erat. Nec vero Moyses sibi scripsit aut sui similis prophetis, nec alii prophetae prophetis, sed qui lumen spiritus clarum habebant iis qui obscuratum habebant scripserunt, quasi memoriae libellos, quibus commemoremur de voluntate spiritus quae solent interpretari ab iis qui clarius lumen spiritus habebant, id est a sacerdotibus et prophetis ipsi populo". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 38v.

prudence” erroneously believe they can do so. The illumination of God’s spirit, instead, belongs exclusively to those who are justified by faith and predestined to eternal life.¹⁰⁹

Whereas this doctrine on justification coincides with the views Pole expounded in his commentaries on the Psalms (which are also closer to the early drafts of *De reformatione*), in the manuscripts of *De reformatione* that were meant to be published (7a, 8, 9a) Pole’s discourse is much more ambiguous. In 8, the only significance attached to good works is the attainment of inner peace and consolation, while there is no reference to any meritorious value of men’s good works.¹¹⁰ It is not by chance that in the revisions to version 9 (which signal the transition from the phase that preceded the approval of the decree on justification to the ensuing stage of the Council) this passage is reformulated to admit that human works can actually get “copious reward in heaven”.¹¹¹ The revealing absence in 8 hints at Pole’s acceptance not merely of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, but more specifically of its formulation in Juan de Valdés’s works, which lay emphasis on “the peace of conscience” [“la paz de la consziencia”], “the quietness” [“la quietud”] and “the whole and perfect confidence of the soul” [“la entera y perfecta seguridad en el ánimo”] as “the first and principal effect of faith”.¹¹² Likewise, in his unpublished commentaries on the Psalms Pole extols the “securitas” and the “peace and consolation” [“pax aut consolatio”], which he detects in those who are certain to be justified by faith and predestined to eternal salvation.¹¹³ Furthermore, in the first part of *De reformatione*, Pole’s insistence on the importance of the reform “per verbum crucis” (which is described as “the word of our regeneration and the word of the gospel”, as well as “the foundation of all the things that are being learnt in the doctrine of Christ and the Church”)¹¹⁴ expresses itself in terms that bear an evident resemblance to

¹⁰⁹ See Valdés, *Considerationi*, pp. [F7r]-G2[r] (26).

¹¹⁰ See *ibid.*, ff. 9r-10v. Cf. BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5964, ff. 66v-69r.

¹¹¹ “Intelligamus et sciamus laborem nostrum non inaniturum Domino, sed pro eo requiem et mercedem copiosam in caelis nobis esse repositam”. BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5964, f. 68v.

¹¹² Valdés, *Matteo*, p. 288; Juan de Valdés, *La epístola de san Pablo a los Romanos i la I. a los Corintios. Ambas traducidas i comentadas por Juan de Valdés* [Luis Usoz y Río (ed.), without typographical indications, Madrid], 1856 (henceforward: Valdés, *Romanos* or Valdés, *I Corintios*), p. 16 (*I Corintios*); Juan de Valdés, *Comentario a los Salmos*, Manuel Carrasco (ed.) (Madrid: Librería nacional y extranjera, 1885; henceforward: Valdés, *Salmos*), pp. 150, 33.

¹¹³ BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5969, ff. 24r, 29r. In the letter written to Gasparo Contarini from Capranica on 22 August 1541, Pole also extolled “pacem animi” as the authentic “fructus [...] iustificationis”. Thomas F. Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, 5 vols. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002-2008), III, p. 592. The whole letter is published *ibid.*, pp. 590-592.

¹¹⁴ BNN, MS. IX.A.14, ff. 4v (“verbum regenerationis nostrae et verbum evangelii”), 4r (“fundamentum omnium quae in doctrina Christi et Ecclesiae discuntur”). Cf. f. 7r.

those used in *The Benefit of Christ*. Nonetheless, all this is combined with an anthropological conception that stresses, as was explained before, the innate divine component within man.

4. *A Treatise for Multiple Audiences*

The long series of rewrites of *De reformatione* reflects, therefore, the whole development of Pole's intellectual trajectory during his Italian stay. As such, it also contains the entire spectrum of the positions he changed in these years. In *De unitate*, Pole had merely modelled his theological argument on other people's positions, without really assimilating them. Owing to pressure from Henry VIII and his councillors, as well as to the shock for the murder of his friends and relatives in England, Pole had been compelled to write about a question on which he did not possess an adequate theological competence. Only a few years before had he begun to study the Scripture and the patristic works. Thus, similarly to many other members of the humanistic circles around Venice,¹¹⁵ he had started to realise the limitations of the classical literature and philosophy he had studied during his youth and that still represented to him, however, an inescapable point of reference.¹¹⁶ In the attempt to outline the doctrinal argument for his thesis, Pole had instinctively drawn on the ideas of those whom he deeply admired for

¹¹⁵ The Florentine poet Francesco Berni expressed his conversion to the Gospel and the "progress of my life" ("il progresso della vita mia") in 18 verses that effectively describe the itinerary shared by many members of the literary circles in Veneto. See, for instance, the reference to Federico Fregoso: "Oh good Fregoso, who shut your ears / To the sirens of poetry, / And who are, in the eternal living Mirror, / Happily enjoying the Philosophy, / of the new Pact, as well as of the old one, / Yet you are free of that frenzy, / Which you shared with Fondul in the past days, / Of reconciling with Plato, Paul and saint Peter" ("O buon Fregoso, che hai chiuso l'orecchio / A le sirene de la poesia, / E ti stai ne l'eterno e vivo specchio, / Lieto godendo la Filosofia, / Ora del nuovo Patto, ora del vecchio, / Sei sgombro pur di quella frenesia / Che avevi col Fondul i giorni a dietro / Di accordar con Platon, Paolo e san Pietro"). According to Pier Paolo Vergerio, who published these verses in 1554, the composition was part of the XX poem of the *Rifacimento dell'Orlando innamorato*. This was a work of Berni's, published posthumously in 1545. Berni's poem (*Stanze del Berna*) would later be republished by the Italian exile Antonio Panizzi, director of the British Museum: «*Orlando innamorato*» di Bojardo, «*Orlando furioso*» di Ariosto, with an *Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians*, memoirs and notes by Antonio Panizzi, 9 vols. (London: William Pickering, 1830-1834), III, pp. 363-366 (my quotation comes from p. 366); cf. p. 359 and ff. For the discussion on the authenticity of these verses, see Salvatore Caponetto, 'Lutero nella letteratura italiana della prima metà del '500. Francesco Berni', in Lorenzo Perrone (ed.), *Lutero in Italia. Studi storici nel V centenario della nascita*, introduzione di Giovanni Miccoli (Casale Monferrato: Marietti, 1983), pp. 47-63, in particular pp. 54-61.

¹¹⁶ This moment of transition in Pole's intellectual trajectory is clearly expressed in his long letter of 17 September 1534. The letter was written from Padua and addressed to Iacopo Sadoletto. It is published in Pole, *Epistolae*, I, pp. 408-417. See in particular pp. 410-416.

their wisdom and charisma. It was from these men, such as Gregorio Cortese and Gasparo Contarini, that Pole had also received constant support, encouragement and protection under difficult circumstances.

Yet within the broad space of theological fluidity, which the crisis of the Church had left open to many different individual quests, Pole's personal reflection was destined to develop, thus confronting the doctrinal and ecclesiological issues that had become thorny and inescapable by the early forties of the XVI century. When this happened, in the convulsive years that preceded the imminent Council, Pole's reflection lead him to unexpected earth-shattering consequences. In this perspective, his *De unitate* and the commentaries on the Psalms represent two landmarks in a trajectory from apologetic tactics towards a strategy of proselytism whose contents, meanwhile, were being defined as heterodox. In the former work, which had been written under the pressure of opposing tensions, the echo of the Erasmian spiritualism had artificially remained crystallised in a dimension that lacked the radical developments implicitly suggested by the Dutch humanist. This radical potential was instead comprehended by Pole through the Valdesian works, which provided him with a different way of conceiving and exercising religious dissimulation. No longer merely considered as pedagogical prudence towards the unrefined, dissimulation thus turned into deliberate nicodemism, which safeguarded the awareness of being outside the emerging theological boundaries. Pole's new outlook was based on the clear distinction between a purely outward formal religiosity, "rather public and common among many" ["magis publica et pluribus communis"], and the authentic religious experience, "more secret and known to fewer" ["secretior et cognita paucioribus"]. This experience takes place in man's inner being, it is guided by the illumination of the spirit "through faith in Christ" ["per fidem in Christum"] and assumes evident esoteric connotations.¹¹⁷ Pole's attitude to this religious conception is epitomised by the cryptic answers he used to give when "one made some trouble for him": he either had recourse to scriptural citations (such as "God's grace is eternal life" [Ro. 6, 23])¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ BAV, *Vat. lat.*, 5969, ff. 22v, 23v. The "most secret [...] protection of God" ["occultissima [...] protectio Dei"] is indeed a privilege that is granted "but to few and greatly loved by God" ["non nisi paucis et Deo admodum dilectis"]. So are "his secrets" ["secreta sua"], which he does not "reveal here and there but to few, who are his selected servants" ["revelat passim omnibus sed paucis, et his selectis suis servis"]. Ibid., ff. 24v, 45r, 30v. Similarly, Juan de Valdés argues that "el negozio cristiano es de pocos [...], porque siempre serán mas los hombres que seguirán al mundo que los que siguieren a Cristo". Valdés, *I Corintios*, p. 143.

¹¹⁸ In the course of his questioning at the Inquisition trial against cardinal Morone (Rome, 24 April 1557), the Dominican friar Angelo Cattani of Diacceto reported that, on one occasion, he had asked Pole "se per l'opere

or just exhorted his hearers “not to wonder what follows from it [justification by faith], provided one knows the truth”. In such cases, his interlocutors often remained puzzled and did not manage to establish whether he pronounced “assertively or *disputative* on these Lutheran matters”.¹¹⁹ Nonetheless, they felt compelled to admit that, even though “this cardinal was not very clear [...], with respect to God’s things [...], he spoke wonderfully, to the point of leaving” his listeners “in suspense”, as the Dominican friar Angelo Cattani of Diacceto declared.¹²⁰

The ambiguity and dissimulation of Pole’s replies also characterise the doctrinal contents of his *De reformatione*. On the one hand, in this treatise Pole often drew upon the vocabulary of concepts which he had used in his first work on the unity of the Church. On the other hand, both the radical developments of his previous ideas and a new doctrinal perspective (influenced by Valdés’s works) seem to emerge in some versions of *De reformatione*. This contradictory coexistence, which remains unsolved, should be considered as closely related to Pole’s reluctance to opt for either of the models of reform that were rapidly taking shape and becoming mutually exclusive in the mid-XVI century. The perception that this process was putting at stake the integrity of the Christendom induced Pole to walk a tightrope, trying to defer as long as possible the choice, which was increasingly pressing, between these antithetical models. As a result, both of them are present in *De reformatione*. It is precisely their peculiar coexistence that also accounts for the simultaneous contradictory presence of contrasting doctrinal assumptions. By drawing on his considerable fund of knowledge about the diverse experiments of (and reflections on) reform he had come across, he was thus able to maintain a certain room for manoeuvre. The humanistic and Neoplatonic concept of the

nostre fatte in charità non meritavamo maggior grado di beatitudine essenziale”. The English cardinal had only replied by quoting saint Paul: “Gratia Dei vita aeterna” [*Rm.* 6, 23]. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 395 (the same quotation was confirmed by Bernardo Bartoli, cf. *ibid.*, p. 113).

¹¹⁹ Cattani claimed to remember that “fra Thomasso di San Miniato [...] disputasse o ragionasse col sudetto cardinale [Pole] in Viterbo, et forse quando era priore et il cardinale era legato, come credo, et disputorno o della satisfattione o del purgatorio o di tutte due insieme. Il prefato fra Thomasso lo condusse per via di consequentie et disse: “Adunque, la confessione non ha tre parte, perché non se ricerca la satisfattione?”. Il cardinale rispose, se mal non mi ricordo: “Non guardate quello che ne seguita, basta tenere la verità”, o simili parole [...]. Mi pare recordare che usasse simili parole de dire quando se parlava seco et se induceva a qualche inconveniente». *Ibid.*, pp. 396-397; cf. p. 398. The same episode was related by the Florentine friar Matteo Lachi, who had been informed about it by Cattani himself. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 148 (deposition of 15-16 July 1555, Borgo San Lorenzo).

¹²⁰ “Non so – Cattani said – s’el cardinale parlava assertive o disputative in queste materie lutherane, benché apresso di me non fosse molto chiaro questo cardinale [...]. Con tutto questo – he eventually admitted –, havendo io parlato moltissime volte col prefato cardinale delle cose di Dio, Sua Signoria ne parlava mirabilmente, di modo che mi faceva stare sospeso nelle cose che ho dette di sopra”. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

dignitas homini, with all its philosophical implications, became in this way the guiding principle for the indispensable reform of customs. The unsystematic theology underpinning Valdés's spiritualistic and individualistic religiosity proved to be, instead, a versatile means for outlining a broad and flexible doctrinal framework, capable of healing the rift in the European Christendom.

In Pole's outlook, indeed, the question of Church reformation was never considered separately from the aspiration towards ecclesiastical unity, which he had clearly voiced as early as in his first work *De unitate Ecclesiae* (1535-1536). His attempt to hold together different conceptions of reform, as well as contrasting theological stances, went in this direction. It must be emphasised that this was not merely a moderate "third way", for Pole got to potentially radical conclusions on the nature of the ecclesiastical institution itself, whose unity he tried to preserve by making it essentially an empty all-embracing shell. In this respect, the lack of a concrete programme for reform in his *De reformatione* is motivated by the will to appeal to a wide variety of people. The very structure of the treatise lent itself very well to this purpose, for it combined the forms of a catechism, a rhetorical pamphlet and a scriptural commentary. The fact that an Italian translation of it was probably undertaken (although never completed) is further evidence for the plausibility of this hypothesis.

The results of the analysis of the manuscripts lead to the conjecture that the numerous rewrites of this work were intended for different audiences at different times. At first, the composition was presumably undertaken in Viterbo, in the early forties, as a personal meditation on the issue of Church reform. The fragmentary character of the earliest versions (1 to 6), as well as their more explicitly radical doctrinal contents, reveal that the manuscript had the same function of Pole's commentaries on the Psalms, which circulated among his closest friends and colleagues in Viterbo. The beginning of a series of versions (from 7a) which were produced for the press signals that, on the eve of the Council or during the first two years (1545-1546), Pole and the *spirituali* decided to publish it as a part of the propaganda campaign that was aimed at securing consensus on their approach to reform. Such activities of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* in the mid-forties will be examined in the second chapter. Like many other works that were written or translated in Viterbo, Pole's *De reformatione* might be published anonymously and without any dedication (which is indeed

lacking in all versions). As a Latin work, in all likelihood it was intended for a learned audience both in Italy and throughout Europe. Not by chance, in these intermediate versions the humanistic and Neoplatonic notions, which constituted a sort of Koine for the European republic of Letters, are more abundant. If an Italian translation was planned, this would be aimed at a socially wider public in Italy. For some reason, however, the project was delayed and the first draft (7a) underwent different revisions. Meanwhile, the approval of the decree on justification (January 1547), which definitively delegitimised Pole's personal opinions on this matter, made it necessary for him to revise again his treatise by expunging or modifying the passages that might cause him problems (9b). From this moment onwards, the defensive strategy Pole adopted at Trent is clearly reflected in the subsequent expurgated manuscripts of *De reformatione*. A similar defensive attitude characterised the project of Pole's friend to publish posthumously his *De reformatione*, which had then become a mere tool for protecting them from further Inquisition trials. Ironically, by the time of Pole's death, his constant aspiration towards ecclesiastical unity, far from being fulfilled, had materialised in an ambiguous and divisive legacy, which was to fuel religious controversies for centuries to come.

CHAPTER IV

Reform Through Other Means:

Pole and the *Ecclesia Viterbiensis*

1.1. A De Facto Plan for Reform

In the previous chapter, a correlation has been established between what I labelled as Pole's "radical eclecticism", which marks the numerous manuscript versions of *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, and his constant aspiration towards the unity of the Church. The contradictory coexistence of contrasting philosophical and doctrinal notions parallels, in the rewrites of *De reformatione*, the analogous juxtaposition of the two main different conceptions of reform that were becoming antithetical in the mid-XVI century. In other words, by having recourse to his own fund of knowledge about different doctrinal ideas, as well as about diverse experiments of and reflections on reform, Pole deliberately chose not to choose, or at least he tried to defer as long as possible a choice which he perceived as a threat to the integrity of Christendom. The indissoluble bond between, on the one hand, the demand for Church reform and, on the other hand, the restoration of ecclesiastical unity did not manifest itself, however, only at the theoretical level, but inspired the very process of writing. As was shown earlier on, the manuscript versions that date from the years between the early forties and 1547 (when the decree on justification was approved) were actually intended for multiple audiences. Like many other books which were written, translated or copied by the circle of the *spirituali* in Viterbo, Pole's *De reformatione* was part, therefore, of a broader propaganda campaign that tried to appeal to a wide variety of people. In this respect, the process of writing of *De reformatione* reflects in turn the *modus operandi* that characterised the strategies pursued by the members of Pole's sodality both in the context of his palace in Viterbo or elsewhere in Italy. The diverse activities of the circle of Viterbo on the eve of and during the first sessions of the Council of Trent will be the subject of the present chapter. Firstly, I will go over other examples of similar groups – in Italy and Spain – whose varied interactions paved the way for the collective experience and the campaign of the Viterbese

circle, many members of which had previously been actively involved (or had already known each other) in those groups. Secondly, I will examine the aims and means of the activities of proselytism carried out by Pole and his friends, who mainly resorted to the channels of preaching, printing and pastoral care.

In the last three decades, more and more secondary works have challenged the traditional (and often apologetic) depiction of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* as a devout community of aristocrats, prelates and scholars who shared an intense religious experience through common reading and meditations.¹ Besides analysing the doctrinal convictions of the members of this group, the new historiographical interpretations have laid great stress on their peculiar ways of aggregation and on their propaganda strategies, which reveal a considerable level of political engagement with the spread of specific ideas beyond the immediate boundaries of the group itself. In this view, the group's self-representation as a pious sodality, retreated in their secluded and idyllic "most sweet quiet",² proves to be a protective screen against prying eyes. As such, it also shows that the group had a conscious identity, which they tried to defend since they were aware that it attracted increasing suspicion within the Roman curia. It was they, indeed, who started to use the terms *spirituali* and "Chiesa viterbiense" ["Viterbese Church"] to designate the group to which they belonged.³ The expression "Chiesa viterbiense", in particular, occurs in a letter written on 31 May 1542 by Pole's first biographer, Ludovico Beccadelli, to Carlo Gualteruzzi, a member of both Clemens VII and Paul III's household who had not only frequent contacts with the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*, but also close relationships with Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna, marquise of Pescara.⁴ The new historiographical reading of the *spirituali*'s proselytism has depicted it as essentially oriented towards generating wide consensus on the religious tendencies shared by Pole and

¹ The first work that advanced a markedly political interpretation is Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, especially p. 104 and ff. See also Firpo, *Tra alumbados e «spirituali»*, pp. 135-153, 155-184.

² "Dolcissima quiete". This expression was used by Marcantonio Flaminio in his letter to Carlo Gualteruzzi, written from Viterbo on 24 November 1541. Flaminio, *Lettere*, p. 112.

³ On the use of the term *spirituale* to designate this group, see Gigliola Fragnito, 'Gli «spirituali» e la fuga di Bernardino Ochino', now published in Gigliola Fragnito, *Cinquecento italiano. Religione, cultura e potere dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma*, Elena Bonora and Miguel Gotor (eds.) (Bologna: il Mulino, 2011), pp. 141-188 (see pp. 145-146, note 11).

⁴ Beccadelli's letter was written from Bologna. See *ibid.*, p. 154, note 33. On Carlo Gualteruzzi, see *DBI*, LX, pp. 193-199. In another letter, written on 9 May 1545 from Ferrara, Francesco Martelli asked Ludovico Beccadelli to greet two cardinals – one of whom is identifiable as Pole – as well as "universam ecclesiam quae est in domo illorum" ["the whole church that is in their house"]. See Fragnito, 'Gli «spirituali»', p. 154, note 33.

his sodality. According to this account, therefore, the circulation of books and ideas inspired by a spiritualised religiosity was aimed not only at creating a flexible platform – which would help absorb the widespread religious ferment and dissent within a common framework –, but also at achieving agreement on a specific political direction to be followed at the imminent Council.⁵

This interpretation, although in many respects correct and sound, needs to be qualified in light of the analysis of Pole's *De reformatione*, which has revealed a nexus between Pole's non-institutional ecclesiology and the virtual absence of any concrete measure of Church reform from this treatise. If the lack of a real programme for reform was also motivated, in the case of *De reformatione*, by the will to appeal to the largest possible audience, the evanescent structure of the Church, at which Pole hinted in his work, was likewise meant to be a comprehensive light framework to preserve the very ecclesiastical unity. Thus the Church which Pole had in mind tended to lose its visible hierarchical structure, similarly to other ecclesiological models which were proposed by the Protestant reformers, as well as in other contexts. This was the case, for example, of the *Beneficio di Cristo*, the most famous religious book that circulated throughout Europe in the XVI century. It is not by chance, as will be explained below, that the most significant elaboration of this work, which was the product of a collective author, was undertaken by Marcantonio Flaminio in Viterbo, under Pole's supervision and with the collaboration of other members of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*.

On this basis one should rethink the relation between the propaganda campaign launched by the *spirituali* during the first half of the forties and the subsequent activity in which Pole engaged at the Council of Trent, together with other prelates who had joined him in Viterbo. According to what can be designated as the political reading of the *spirituali*'s campaign, this collective endeavour was to a large degree propaedeutic to the conciliar arena, where these people would try to implement their programme for reform and reconciliation. This presupposes, first of all, that the main focus of Pole's *spirituali* was on the Council, regarded as the pivotal venue for the fulfilment of the long-awaited healing of the Church, as well as of the divisions in the Christendom. In the second place, it also presupposes the actual existence of a precise line of action, which Pole and his allies would follow at Trent. The observations

⁵ See Massimo Firpo, 'Vittoria Colonna, Giovanni Morone e gli «spirituali»', in Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma*, pp. 131-180 (see pp. 143-144).

on Pole's *De reformatione*, however, raise some doubts about both of these assumptions. It is at least debatable, as seen above, whether Pole had a precise project for reform which he intended to pursue at the Council. Moreover, given the non-institutional ecclesiology and the unsystematic theology that emerge from his treatise on Church reform, it seems less likely that an institutional arena, such as the Council, would be the privileged place where he chose to invest most of his hopes and efforts to accomplish his aspirations. In his perspective, other contexts and types of activity must assume greater prominence for this purpose. It is by virtue of this that the experience of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* can be read not as merely preliminary to the conciliar phase, but rather as the main stage of the process of reform as conceived by Pole and his group. This does not mean, of course, that the Council was not important to him, for it also absorbed a great deal of his energies and thoughts. Nonetheless, the order of priority of these two phases should probably be reversed. Through their campaign, Pole and the *spirituali* tried to establish facts on the ground that would constitute the basis for the imminent debates at Trent. The Council would consequently sanction, in their view, the positions that had previously managed to gain more ground in terms both of political support and widespread consensus. For them the crucial battlefield was another one, which meant that also the channels for their campaign had to be different from the institutional ones. In many ways, therefore, the campaign itself of the *spirituali* on the eve of the Council represented a de facto plan for reform.

1.2. How It All Began. 1541, Pole and Contarini: a Controversial Turning Point

This reading of the activities undertaken by the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* has at least two significant corollaries. Firstly, it provides a reason for the ironic lack of a proper programme for ecclesiastical reformation in Pole's treatise on Church reform. This absence is even more striking and meaningful if one takes into account the fact that, between 1536 and 1537, Pole had already participated in the papal commission for reform and contributed to drafting its final report (*Consilium de emendanda Ecclesia*),⁶ although playing a minor role. He was not

⁶ See above, pp. 24-25.

unfamiliar, anyway, with such programmes, whose points are instead hardly mentioned in *De reformatione*. The reason for this glaring omission must be therefore other than inexperience. Secondly, the interpretation which I have suggested also offers another possible explanation for Pole's increasing distance towards his former mentor Gasparo Contarini, who between 1541 and 1542 began to realise that the support he had always received from Pole was progressively vanishing. Indeed, the evident reticence (if not, occasionally, coolness) which Pole showed during this period in his correspondence with Contarini reveals that he was less and less convinced by the positions of the old Venetian prelate, although remaining stubbornly loath to make his own reservations explicit.⁷ The incipient rift between Pole and Contarini started to surface during the Colloquy of Regensburg, between April and May 1541. In April, Pole announced his intention to leave Rome soon,⁸ which he did on 12 May.⁹ Contarini did not conceal his disappointment for the unexpected departure of Pole, the

⁷ See Pole's letters to Contarini in Pole, *Epistolae*, III, especially pp. 26-30 (Capranica, 16 July 1541); pp. 30-31 (Capranica, 1 September 1541); pp. 40-42 (Viterbo, 21 October, 26 October e 9 December 1541); pp. 43-46 (Viterbo, 23 December 1541); pp. 49-50 (Viterbo, 29 January 1542) pp. 52-54 (Viterbo, 1 May 1542); p. 58 (Viterbo, 20 June 1542); p. 59 (Viterbo, 18 July 1542); pp. 60-61 (Viterbo, 8 August e 14 August 1542). There exists another letter to Contarini, written from Capranica on 22 August 1541. This letter is not present in the collection of Pole's correspondence edited by cardinal Angelo Maria Querini, but is published in Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, III, pp. 590-592. Mayer maintains that in this letter Pole dispelled all his alleged reservations about the doctrine of double justification, which Contarini tried to defend during and after the Colloquies of Regensburg. Mayer's opinion, however, is not acceptable, for in this letter Pole did not venture beyond what he evasively wrote in his letter of 16 July 1541. Furthermore, following a usual practice of his, Pole left further details to his friend Priuli: "Please hear the rest from our Priuli" ("Si quae restant, ex Priuli nostri literis dignaberis intelligere"), *ibid.*, p. 592. Lastly, it should be noted that Pole used in this letter an evident Valdesian expression with relation to the "peace of the soul" as authentic "result of justification" (p. 592). On this letter, see above, p. 86 and note 113.

⁸ In the postscript of a letter to Contarini (Rome, 22 April 1541), Pole wrote: "I won't add anything about my departure and the causes that impelled me, for I have entrusted our Priuli with the task of writing more at length to Beccadelli" ("De meo secessu, et causis quae me urgebant, quia Priolo nostro negotium dedi ut ad Becadellum nostrum fusius scribat, nihil est quod adiungam"). Pole, *Epistolae*, III, p. 24. The postscript to this letter was added on 1st May, in reply to a (missing) letter which Contarini wrote on 16 April. It is not clear whether Pole anticipated the letter written by Priuli to Beccadelli on 20 May. Priuli did not elaborate on the causes of Pole's departure, but only said that Pole was intent on writing the commentary on a Psalm, which offered him the opportunity to deal with the matters of "justification, faith, works, law etc." ("Sua Signoria reverendissima è tuttavia assiduo nella incominciata inanci il partir vostro expositione del Salmo, nella qual mi ha detto ha avuto et ha occasione di parlar de tutte queste materie, cioè de iustificatione, de fide, de operibus, de lege etc. [...]. Il reverendissimo signor legato [Contarini] et il reverendo padre maestro [Tommaso Badia] saranno li primi, per quanto mi ha detto, ai quali Sua Signoria reverendissima la comunicherà per haverne il parer loro santissimo e dottissimo". Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ital., C. 25, ff. 169r-174v).

⁹ That day Pietro Bembo wrote to Contarini: "This morning the Most Reverend Monsignor Pole has gone to Capranica and left to me the business he had on behalf of Your Most Reverend Signory, which will be a very pleasant burden to me" ("Monsignor reverendissimo Polo questa mattina è ito a starsi questa state in Capranica et a me ha lasciate le cure che havea a nome di Vostra Signoria reverendissima, che a me saranno gratissimo peso"). Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 147. Pole remained in Capranica until September, when he finally moved to Viterbo as legate to the Patrimony of Saint Peter.

cardinal who potentially could best defend his positions within the sacred college. In a letter to Pietro Bembo, Contarini wrote that Pole's absence "just occurred in the worst possible moment".¹⁰

The above-mentioned studies of Simoncelli and Firpo (followed by many other scholars) have linked the unforeseen departure of Pole from Rome to a sort of religious conversion which he experienced in the early 1540s through the influence of the humanist writer Marcantonio Flaminio. In 1540, just before Pole's retreat to Rome (according to the testimony of the protonotary apostolic Pietro Carnesecchi), Flaminio had begun a correspondence "on the matter of justification" ["in materia della giustificazione"] with Pole's closest friend, the Venetian patrician Alvise Priuli. Flaminio's purpose was to "instil in him [Priuli] the new opinions which he [Flaminio] had formed on this matter through his association with Valdés [in Naples]".¹¹ Significantly, this correspondence was followed by the arrival in Viterbo of many aristocrats and scholars who had previously gathered around Valdés in Naples. Even before Valdés died (in July 1541), his disciples had already begun to join Pole in his residence of Viterbo. In the light of these concomitant events, Pole's increasing distance from Contarini seems motivated, in Simoncelli and Firpo's view, by his awareness that the theological ideas he had recently accepted were by then too far from the ones of his Venetian colleague. In Pole's eyes, the doctrinal divergence between them was hardly remediable; it would only risk

¹⁰ "Desidereria che il reverendissimo Polo fusse in Roma a questi tempi et a questi manegi: in vero non poteva essere absente a tempo più incomodo". Contarini's letter to Bembo, written from Ratisbona on 28 June 1541, is published in Dittrich, *Regesten und Briefe* cit., p. 341. Contarini manifested his disappointment to Pole himself, as emerges from Pole's letter of 16 July 1541. See Pole, *Epistolae*, III, pp. 28-29.

¹¹ The officials of the Holy Office found one of these letters, together with the *Apologia del Beneficio di Cristo*, among the writings of Pietro Carnesecchi. During the examination on 13 December 1566, the protonotary recognised it as being written by Priuli to Flaminio: "It deals with the matter of justification, but soberly and without any scandal" ("in essa si tratta la materia della giustificazione, sobriamente però et senza scandalo alcuno"). *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/1, p. 196 (recognition of the documents confiscated in Pietro Carnesecchi's house in Florence on 22 June 1566; Rome, 13 September 1566). During the examination of 20 February 1567, when the inquisitors asked Carnesecchi more information on the letter, he explained that "the above-mentioned letter was written at the time when Flaminio and I were in Naples with Valdés – that was in the year 1540 –; and Priuli was then in Rome by the cardinal of England. The occasion when it was written can be easily understood through the tenor of the letter itself, which was the reply – as one can see – to some other letter written earlier by Flaminio to the said Priuli on the matter of justification, instilling in him the new opinions which he [Flaminio] had formed on this matter through his association with Valdés" ("la sudetta lettera fu scritta nel tempo che il Flaminio et io eravamo a Napoli col signor Valdés, che fu nell'anno 1540, et il Priuli si trovava allhora a Roma apresso al cardinale d'Inghilterra. L'occasione con che fu scritta si può facilmente comprendere dal tenore della lettera istessa, la quale si vede esser in risposta di qualche lettera scritta prima dal Flaminio a esso Priuli in materia della giustificazione, insinuandoli le nove opinioni intorno a ciò acquisite da lui mediante la conversazione di Valdés"). *Ibid.*, II/3, p. 1042; cf. p. 1041.

manifesting itself had they continued the awkward epistolary dialogue which Contarini had solicited in the aftermath of Regensburg, in order to gain Pole's support on his conduct of the religious colloquies and to restore the unity of the moderate curial wing.¹²

The very claim that there existed a doctrinal rift between Contarini and Pole has been challenged by Thomas Mayer in his biography of Pole.¹³ By adopting the category of a substantially homogeneous "reform tendency" within the Roman curia, Mayer has also underscored the vague identity of the *spirituali*, which he sees as an "amorphous group of people".¹⁴ As a consequence, he has criticised the representation of the activities of this group as an intentional propaganda campaign to spread their ideas by targeting some of the most influential lay and clerical figures in Italy.¹⁵ The evidence that Marcantonio Flaminio at first convinced Pole to embrace Valdesian doctrines – and later assumed a leading role in Viterbo – is at least as persuasive, in Mayer's opinion, as the apologetic accounts that Pole, on the contrary, tried to rescue Flaminio from heretical beliefs. Admittedly, as Mayer himself points out, those who provided the latter accounts had obvious "motives of self-preservation" for attributing to Pole the alleged intention of saving Flaminio from heresy, "as of course did Pole himself".¹⁶ One of these versions is Filippo Gheri's report of the 1553 meeting between Pole and Carafa in Saint Paul Outside the Walls,¹⁷ while the other two are to be found in the so-called *Confessio* of cardinal Morone, who wrote it for the Holy Office when he was a prisoner in Castel Sant'Angelo,¹⁸ and in Ludovico Beccadelli's biography of Pole.¹⁹ Other scholars that have lent some credence to these versions, such as Domingo de Santa Teresa and Dermot Fenlon, have argued that Pole was indeed worried about Flaminio's opinions. What alarmed Pole, however, was not so much Flaminio's association with Valdés (who had not denied any

¹² See Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, pp. 117-120; Firpo, *Tra alumbados e «spirituali»*, pp. 160-161.

¹³ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 103-113. For the debate between Mayer and Firpo, see Massimo Firpo, 'Note su una biografia di Reginald Pole', *Rivista storica italiana*, 113 (2001), pp. 859-874; Mayer, 'What to Call the "spirituali"'.¹⁴

¹⁴ Mayer, 'What to Call the "spirituali"', p. 11.

¹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 17-19.

¹⁶ Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 118. Cf. above, Chapter II, pp. 25-28.

¹⁷ Pole's talk with Carafa was related by Filippo Gheri in his "private letter upon the matters of the most reverend Pole" (written on 29 April 1553 to Ludovico Beccadelli). Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 347-353 (pp. 349-350). See above, p. 55.

¹⁸ See *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 425.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 326-327. Mayer claims that Beccadelli's version is likely to be based upon Morone's one, since none of them, contrary to Filippo Gheri's letter, mentions Valdés when dealing with the arrival of Flaminio in Viterbo. See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 118.

dogma and shared with Pole similar views on justification), but rather his overt defiance of the official doctrine of the Church with the regard to the sacrament of penance and the purgatory.²⁰ These and similar historiographical interpretations have thus tended to lessen the key role played by former Valdesian disciples (especially by Flaminio) both in the evolution of Pole's religious sensibility and, consequently, in the formation of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*.

1.3. *Strategical Divergence: Finding a Suitable Medium for a New Religious Message*

One would probably go too far in saying that Pole experienced a dazzling conversion to Valdesianism, as was the case with his friend Giovanni Morone. Whereas the latter, with the enthusiasm of a neophyte, would immediately try to translate the “enlightening doctrines” he had learned from Pole and Flaminio into his pastoral practice,²¹ Pole always maintained a more cautious attitude, which allowed him some room for manoeuvre by resorting to his radical eclecticism. Yet the comparison between Pole's earlier works – such as *De unitate Ecclesiae* – and his writings of the early 1540s (the commentaries on the Psalms and the first fragmentary versions of *De reformatione*) has demonstrated, as was mentioned in Chapter I,

²⁰ See Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience*, pp. 89-90; cf. Domingo de Santa Teresa, *Juan de Valdés 1498(?)–1541. Su pensamiento religioso y las corrientes espirituales de su tiempo* (Romae: apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1957), pp. 402-404.

²¹ The Florentine Dominican friar Bernardo Bartoli, who had a close association with the *spirituali* in Viterbo, would declare that Morone “told me greatest things in praise of the most reverend cardinal Pole and, among others, how he [Morone] heard from him [Pole] enlightening words about this matter of justification, by saying that earlier he [Morone] had fiercely opposed this opinion, but after he spoke and acquired association with monsignor Pole, he embraced this doctrine as a most holy thing” (“mi disse cose grandissime in laude del cardinale reverendissimo Polo, et inter caetera come da lui era stato illuminato circa di questa materia della giustificatione, con dirmi che prima era inimicissimo di questa opinione ma, poi che parlò et prese pratica con monsignor Polo, prese questa dottrina come cosa sanctissima”). *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 78 (deposition of Bernardo Bartoli; San Gimignano, 7-10 July 1555); cf. p. 77. On Bernardo Bartoli, see the biographical note *ibid.*, pp. 54-55. Cf. the *informatio* (Rome, 1551) and the deposition (Bologna, 25-28 July 1555) of Giovan Battista Scotti from Bologna, who underlined the role played by Flaminio and Pole in “seducing” Morone into “the Lutheran doctrine”. Pole, in particular, “let Flaminio do and say, and when they [Flaminio and Morone] turned to him, as judge of their divergences, he confirmed Flaminio's assertions” (“il reverendissimo cardinal Polo lasciava fare et dire al Flaminio et poi, quando ricorrevono a lui come a giudice delle lor differentie, egli confermava le sententie del Flaminio”). *Ibid.*, p. 217; cf. p. 8. In the early 1540s Scotti too had close association with the *spirituali* as well as with other heretical groups. By virtue of Pole's protection, in 1543 he managed to abjure, thus avoiding an inquisitorial sentence. Later on, he started to collaborate regularly with the Inquisition. For biographical information on him, see *ibid.*, pp. 3-7.

that a remarkable change in Pole's soteriological views did indeed take place in the early 1540s and was deeply influenced by the ideas of Juan de Valdés.

The personal evolution of Pole's religiosity in a direction that increasingly diverged from Contarini's orientations is not sufficient, however, to explain the rift that emerged between them (and, consequently, also between Contarini and the members of Pole's sodality in Viterbo).²² The argument that – at the very moment when Contarini reached a theological compromise with Melancton – Pole forsook his friend because, in the meantime, he had developed more radical doctrinal views (potentially more akin to those of the Protestants) is therefore not entirely convincing. Given Pole's long-lasting aspirations and commitment to the achievement of reconciliation, it is unlikely that he retreated his support when the long-awaited agreement was on the horizon. Indeed, as has already been noted in the previous chapter, the relevance of doctrinal matters was not such, in Pole's opinion, as to justify worsening contentions. Notwithstanding that Pole – in his letter to Contarini of 17 May 1541 – referred to the doctrine of justification as “the foundation of the whole Christian doctrine”, he would not go as far as jeopardising, on these grounds, the actual integrity of the moderate curial wing as well as a unique opportunity for reconciliation, which appeared to be within their grasp. In the same letter, Pole declared himself to be “imbued with joy, when I saw this consonance of opinions”, for “foundation of peace and concord has been laid”.²³ He also regretted that Contarini had asked him to keep this heartening news a secret, even though for understandable reasons.²⁴

²² This disagreement is proved not only by their correspondence of the years 1541-1542, but also by the deposition of Niccolò Bargellesi, a Bolognese priest who in this period had contacts with Flaminio and Contarini. During the first Inquisition trial of Pietro Carnesecchi, Bargellesi related that he transcribed a manuscript version of the *Beneficio di Cristo*, which had been given to him by Flaminio. Bargellesi presented his transcription to Contarini, who commented that the work “was out of line” and repeatedly exclaimed: “Oh poor Flaminio, he goes too far!” (“in effecto el passava li termini; accosì me disse, et più volte replicò in pari proposito: «Oh povero Flaminio, el passa troppo!»”). *Processi Carnesecchi*, I, p. 5.

²³ “Sensi vero tali me perfundi gaudio, cum hanc consonantiam opinionum videre, quantam nulla quamvis suavis armonia animum et aures unquam permulcere posset. Nec vero tantum ob eam causam: quod magnum fundamentum pacis et concordiae iactum esse videbam, quam quod hoc fundamentum illud agnoscerem quod super omnia, ut mihi quidem videtur, gloriam Christi illustrat: est vero fundamentum totius doctrinae christianae. Etsi enim diversa tractari videntur, ut de fide et operibus ac iustificatione, tamen omnia ad unum iustificationis caput referri [...]. Et Deo per Christum gratiam ago, qui tales vos ministros elegit et idoneos fecit tam praeclarae concordiae in tam solido fundamento resarciendae, ex quo in magnam spem venimus, qui tam misericorditer coepit in consolidando hoc fundamentum reliqua quae ad opus beneficii pertinent eadem bonitate perfecturum”. Pole, *Epistolae*, pp. 25-26.

²⁴ “Quod vero iubes, ut ne divulgem sed secreto apud me habeam quae de hac concordia sunt scripta, doleo ita tempora exigere. Video vero quid te impellit ut hoc facias, neque vero aliis a me ostendentur quam iis quos

At the time when Pole wrote these words, however, he had already left Rome for Capranica. Only later did he receive the full text of the article on justification, as discussed in Regensburg, and the explanatory notes which Contarini had prepared specifically for him to obtain his opinion.²⁵ When Pole finally replied (though in an ambiguous way that did not conceal some reservations), he felt compelled to excuse his absence from Rome. He maintained that he had taken the decision to leave at a moment when Contarini's reports seemed to suggest that the colloquies in Regensburg were not getting anywhere and that he was ready to get back.²⁶ To be sure, in his letters from Regensburg Contarini did not report any significant news until 16 April.²⁷ Nevertheless, even in the following months Pole did not do anything to actually support his older friend and defend him from the "expected storm", that is to say the cardinals' disputes over the doctrine of justification which Contarini formulated with Melancthon.²⁸ The ways in which the events were unfolding did not bode well for the aspirations of the varied group that was susceptible to the need of healing the rift in the European Christendom. These people, whose leading figure had until then been Gasparo Contarini, had hoped to achieve at least a partial agreement with the Protestants before the beginning of the Council. Instead, it did not take long for Pole and other colleagues of his to realise that no significant result was to be expected from the Colloquy of Regensburg. Initially, Contarini had to wait long for the arrival of the prince-electors. He had reached the imperial city on 11 March, but only in his letter to Pole of 6 April did he report that the elector of Mainz (cardinal Albert von Hohenzollern) had arrived, whereas the other electors had sent ambassadors.²⁹ Subsequently, Pole became aware that the doctrinal

nominasti". Ibid., p. 26.

²⁵ On Contarini's explanatory notes to Pole, see Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, pp. 187-188, note 241. On 25 May 1541 – in order to explain and defend the doctrine underpinning the article on justification of Regensburg – Contarini also wrote his famous *epistola de iustificatione* to the theologian of Ercole Gonzaga, cardinal of Mantua. This letter is published in Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 150-162.

²⁶ "Mihi tunc videbatur illis negotiis, in quibus mea qualiscumque opera tibi servire potuisset, cum tu potius de discessu tuo in illius temporis literis tuis significares, quam ullam spem maiora negotia et talia tractandi dares".

²⁷ See the letters which Contarini wrote to Pole between 14 March and 6 April 1541: Pole, *Epistolae*, III, pp. 16-17 (14 March 1541; Contarini had arrived in Regensburg 3 days earlier); p. 19 (22 March 1541); pp. 20-21 (6 April 1541). Contarini's letter of 16 April (mentioned by Pole in the postscript of his letter of 22 April; see *ibid.*, pp. 23-24) is missing.

²⁸ "Postea accepi nonnullos (id quod etiam ad me scriptum est) hanc meam absentiam sic interpretatos fuisse ut dicerent ideo me discessisse ut praeviam hanc procellam – sic enim appellant, propter quorundam principum virorum in ea causa altercationes – evitarem". Ibid., pp. 28-29 (Pole to Contarini; Capranica, 16 July 1541).

²⁹ "Hisce diebus, postquam huc perveni, nihil est actum. Caesar principes operiebatur; venerunt, sed non frequentes: venit Landgravius [Philip I of Hesse], venit magontinus cardinalis elector; caeteri electores omnes oratores destinaverunt, ne viderentur moram facere caesari, ne queat inire consilium de agendis". Ibid., p. 20. Cf.

agreement of Regensburg was to encounter stiff opposition within the Sacred College (the “expected storm” mentioned in his letter).

The fact that Pole began to deny his support to his Venetian friend when the situation appeared to be stalemated leads to the hypothesis that the motives for his progressive reticence towards Contarini were not only doctrinal, but primarily strategical. As early as 1540 (according to Carnesecchi’s testimony), Pole had been indirectly reached by Valdesian proselytism through the correspondence between Flaminio and Priuli “on the matter of justification”. Given Pole’s propensity to commit the most thorny political or doctrinal issues to the letters of his friend Priuli,³⁰ it is likely that Pole himself was the main target of Flaminio’s propaganda. Flaminio was actually not the only one to be aware of the close bond between the English cardinal and Alvise Priuli, for it was common knowledge that “one could say the same about either of them”.³¹ Some works which Pole wrote shortly after the correspondence between Flaminio and Priuli – such as the commentaries on the Psalms – show, not by chance, an incipient shift towards some of the Valdesian ideas. Nonetheless, Pole did not desert Contarini at this point. It was only later that his stances started to diverge from Contarini’s ones. This happened when the path they had pursued together until then proved to end in a quagmire, at least in Pole’s view. On the one hand, the Colloquy of Regensburg had had, at first, a low participation, whereas afterwards one could easily anticipate that the doctrinal agreement on justification was to encounter hostility among the cardinals. On the other hand, the Council too had been already summoned in 1536, but still continued to be postponed indefinitely.

Between 1540 and 1541, Pole had certainly got to holding doctrinal opinions that differed, at least partially, from the ones which he had previously shared with Contarini. He now had, therefore, a new religious message which could be employed on a larger scale – given its unsystematic eclectic nature – as a flexible framework, by virtue of which the almost uncontrollable religious ferment could be reabsorbed into a unitary system. Yet for this purpose it was not enough to have a message: a suitable medium was also needed which

p. 19.

³⁰ See above, p. 97, note 7.

³¹ “Perché quello si diceva d’uno s’affermava ancora del altro”. This statement was made by Giovan Battista Scotti, during the Inquisition trial against cardinal Morone. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 215 (Bologna, 25-28 July 1555).

ought to have been different from the conventional institutional channels. Diets, religious colloquies and the council did not constitute a suitable medium for promoting a message based on the kind of individualistic religiosity that had found expression, for example, in Pole's *De reformatione*. In any case, the developments in Regensburg, as well as the delayed opening of the Council, were proving that through such means it was difficult to get very far for the time being. It is against this backdrop that one ought to examine the move of many of Valdés's disciples from Naples to Viterbo. The very circle of *spirituali* became the new medium, which was, to Pole and Flaminio's mind, suited to the purpose of spreading the captivating message that would circulate throughout Italy and even beyond. The presence of numerous members of Valdés's Neapolitan sodality indeed ensured a considerable fund of experience and relations, which proved to be an indispensable legacy for the campaign of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*. Most of the activities pursued by Viterbo's *spirituali* had actually been undertaken by the people who had associated with Valdés in Naples. During the second half of the 1530s, these people had already taken advantage of the opportunities for proselytism which pastoral care and preaching offered. With the regard to these channels, the *spirituali* essentially continued what had previously been done. As far as books are concerned, instead, Valdés and his disciples had usually limited themselves to a more discreet circulation of manuscripts, whereas the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* (and this was probably one the most innovative aspects of their propaganda campaign) made extensive use of the press.

By virtue of Pole's patronage, his new group could aspire to more ambitious objectives, as well as to an enlargement of the range of their propaganda. Pole enjoyed an outstanding reputation for a number of reasons. Firstly, he was the scion of one of the oldest and prestigious English royal dynasties. Secondly, as a consequence of his staunch opposition to his cousin Henry VIII, on the occasion of the king's breach with the Roman Church, he had risen to the highest ranks of the Vatican curia. As one of the most influential figures within the Sacred College of cardinals, Pole represented a formidable bridgehead for the *spirituali*'s campaign, which could thus try to generate greater consensus in the very heart of the Church. This was not the only advantage which Pole's position could give to the proselytism of the *spirituali*. An even more decisive factor in a more widespread penetration of their ideas into different social strata was Pole's designation (on 13 August 1541) as legate to the Patrimony

of Saint Peter (*Patrimonium Sancti Petri*), one of the provinces that constituted the papal territories.³² The legate to the *Patrimonium Petri* resided in Viterbo and acted as a go-between for the pope, performing the functions of a governor that had wide autonomy in conducting local affairs.³³ Thus the papal bull of appointment of Pole conceded him the “free power” of a legate *a latere*, which in this case included the prerogative of being responsible for the government of the province.³⁴ Not only did Pole have, in this way, more room for manoeuvre than he would have in Rome, but he could also exert more direct control over the progress of the *spirituali*’s activities of proselytism. The presence in this group of aristocrats, bishops and other prelates who had an analogous control over different areas – ranging from the Republic of Venice to Sicily – gave the opportunity to reach virtually the entire territory of the Italian peninsula and even to go beyond, given the close ties of these aristocrats with the Spanish crown.

It must be remembered that Pole himself had cordial relationships with Charles V since the time of his break with Henry VIII. Pole and the emperor had first met in 1538, when the former accompanied pope Paul III to the negotiations that would lead to the Truce of Nice between Charles and Francis I.³⁵ In the following year, during his second legatine mission, Pole had met again the emperor in Toledo, in order to convince him to join a league of Christian princes against Henry VIII. Pole’s privileged relationship with the Habsburg monarchy, as well as the affinity between his hopes for religious reconciliation and the imperial agenda, undoubtedly constituted an important factor of continuity between the experience of the Valdesian Neapolitan sodality and that of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*, which

³² The Patrimony of Saint Peter roughly corresponded to the current provinces of Viterbo and Civitavecchia.

³³ See Paola Mascioli, *Viterbo nel Quattrocento. Politica, amministrazione, poteri nella periferia pontificia* (Roma: Vecchiarelli, 2004), especially pp. 7 and ff., 37 and ff.

³⁴ “Facimus, constituimus, ordinamus et deputamus dantes et concedentes [...] liberam et omnimodam potestatem et facultatem legati de latere, ac nostro et dicte sedis nomine recipiendi et gubernandi administrationem civitatis, terras, castra, oppida, loca”. Cf. Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, I, p. 275, although his edition of Pole’s correspondence is often seriously affected by misinterpretation of Latin texts, as is the case with this bull.

³⁵ On this occasion, according to Beccadelli’s biography, Charles had asked the pope to meet Pole. They met in Villefranche-sur-Mer, where Charles held a long and cordial conversation with Pole, “as if he had been his brother” (“mi ricordo che, giunti a Nizza, la prima volta che l’imperatore s’abboccasse con Sua Santità [...] fece per monsignor di Granvela subito dimandare del cardinal Polo, per desiderio di vederlo et parlargli, ché ben sapeva Sua Maestà il valor di quello et gli obblighi che gli haveva per la difesa c’havea sempre tenuta nella causa della regina Catherina sua zia. Et mi trovai anchora quando il cardinal Polo andò a Villafranca a visitar Sua Maestà, la qual subito lasciate altre visite et affari lo ricevè con quella ciera come se fratello stato gli fosse, et l’intrattenne lungamente”). Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 296-297.

was in line with the former group with regard to the political alignment. In this respect, thanks to Pole's personal prestige and the extent of his diplomatic connections, his leadership in the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* promised to be not a mere continuation but rather an extension and a strengthening of the role which Valdés had played in the Neapolitan circle.

2.1. *A Shrewd Courtier and Diplomat: the Obscure Side of Juan de Valdés*

Juan de Valdés has usually received considerable scholarly attention as author of religious works and, above all, of the *Diálogo de la lengua* (*Dialogue on Language*), which has become his best known work, as well as a required reading in graduate courses in Spanish.³⁶ Yet only in 1737 was the *Dialogue on Language* published for the first time, which indicates that certainly for centuries it had not been the most popular of Valdés's writings. The scholarship's enduring neglect of other dimensions that represented a major part in Valdés's life – such as his active involvement in the political events, or even intrigues, of his time – has also heavily influenced the interpretation of his Neapolitan sodality.³⁷ This group has usually been portrayed as a closed circle of refined aristocrats and men of letters (as Valdés himself was traditionally regarded), who devoted themselves fully “to the purity of beauty, language, and religion”.³⁸ Surprisingly, similar descriptions still persist, with slight variations, even in the valuable research of Daniel Crews. In Crew's view, Valdés's Neapolitan circle was essentially “an officially sponsored humanist sodality” that aimed at making Spanish “an imperial language fit for the Italian cultural elite”, as well as to care for the particular spiritual

³⁶ See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 102.

³⁷ A remarkable exception to this tendency is Marcel Bataillon's classic study *Érasme et l'Espagne* (first published in 1937), in which Valdés is presented as an exponent of the so-called Spanish Erasmism. It was Bataillon that discovered and published Valdés's *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (*Dialogue on Christian Doctrine*). This work was imbued, to his mind, with the same Erasmian ideology that inspired the programmes for reform of Charles's entourage, namely of his Grand Chancellor Mercurino of Gattinara and his secretary for the Latin correspondence Alfonso de Valdés, Juan's brother. See Bataillon's introduction to Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, reproduction en fac-similé de l'exemplaire de la Bibliothèque Nationale de Lisbonne; édition d'Alcalá de Henares, 1529, avec une introduction et des notes par Marcel Bataillon (Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1925). See also Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España. Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI* (México-Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1966; segunda edición en español, corregida y aumentada; first Spanish edition: 1950), in particular pp. 328-363.

³⁸ Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 92.

needs of Valdés's favourite disciple, the charming countess Giulia Gonzaga.³⁹ Despite these weaknesses, Crew's biography of Juan de Valdés remains the first serious attempt to integrate the traditional portrait of Valdés as a humanist, religious writer and spiritual leader with the image of a worldly and shrewd courtier that built a lightning political career.

In 1532, through the mediation of his brother Alfonso – who worked in the imperial chancellery as Gattinara's secretary for the Latin correspondence –, Juan managed to be appointed as secret chamberlain to Clement VII. The pope was favourably impressed by Valdés's "virtue and doctrine" and the "studious caution" he showed at work,⁴⁰ which consisted in collecting payments for offices and taking care of the pope's secret accounts.⁴¹ In the same year, Alfonso's death induced Charles to designate Juan as an imperial secretary. Thus Valdés took part in the negotiations between the pope and the emperor (which led to the second treaty of Bologna in 1533) in the dual capacity of imperial secretary and secret chamberlain to Clement VII, a position which he maintained until the pope's death in 1534. In the meantime, he left Rome and moved to Naples, where he remained as an intelligence agent for the viceroy of Naples, Pedro de Toledo. Valdés's diplomatic skill and his ability to play behind the scenes allowed him to continue enjoying good reputation at the papal court during the pontificate of Paul III,⁴² even though at the same time he served three cardinals who were political rivals of the Farnese family, to which the new pope belonged. In one case, Valdés's mediation decisively contributed to sparing the life of the notoriously corrupt cardinal of Ravenna, Benedetto Accolti, who also managed to maintain his position and prebends.⁴³ Whereas very little is known about Valdés's association with cardinal Ippolito de' Medici (Clement VII's nephew), who died in mysterious circumstances,⁴⁴ his close relationship with the cardinal of Mantua, Ercole Gonzaga, is attested by the surviving correspondence between them. Cardinal Gonzaga was the brother of the duke of Mantua Federico and of an imperial

³⁹ Ibid., p. 106. For a critique of Crew's interpretation of the Neapolitan sodality, see Massimo Firpo's review of 'Twilight of the Renaissance', *Rivista storica italiana*, 122 (2010), pp. 847-851.

⁴⁰ Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 56.

⁴¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

⁴² The pope confirmed Valdés's prebend in the diocese of Cuenca, in consideration of "the honesty of his life and custom and other praiseworthy merits of rectitude and virtues" ("vitae ac morum honestas aliaque laudabilia probitatis et virtutum merita"). Quoted by Massimo Firpo in his *Introduction* to Juan de Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano. Domande e risposte. Della predestinazione. Catechismo*, Massimo Firpo (ed.) (Torino: Einaudi, 1994), p. LIII. Cf. Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 96.

⁴³ See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, pp. 73-78.

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, pp. 78-85.

general (Ferrante) who had taken part in Charles V's military expedition to Tunis in 1535. At least until 1537, when Ercole Gonzaga had to fly Rome, Valdés could therefore rely on the cardinal as a precious source of information and a point of reference in Rome.⁴⁵ In these years they kept a close correspondence, which was sometimes written in cypher.⁴⁶ The remaining letters range in date from 18 September 1535 to January 1537 and reveal the deep involvement of Juan de Valdés in the European political events of his time, such as the changing alliances between the pope, the emperor and the French king, the execution of Thomas More in England and Paul III's territorial ambitions in Italy.⁴⁷ The image of Valdés that emerges from this correspondence is that of a man who, far from being exclusively absorbed in his religious and literary works, or in quasi-mistical meditations, actually played an active part within the intricate network of officials, ambassadors, emissaries and spies that revolved around the cabinet of Charles V.

It was during this same period that Valdés wrote his *Diálogo de la lengua*. This work marked, to a large extent, the end of the most worldly phase of his career: "Ten years, the best of my life – as he admitted in the *Dialogue* –, which I spent in palaces and courts".⁴⁸ In the same period, his correspondence with cardinal Gonzaga progressively decreased and probably ended in the beginning of 1537. The continuation of Valdés's political commitments in Naples is attested by the existence of some letters which he wrote between November 1539 and December 1540 to Francisco de los Cobos, who had taken Valdés into his patronage between 1535 and 1536.⁴⁹ The tortuous evolution of the relationships between these two men provides further evidence for Valdés's exceptional ability to foster his own career even under adverse circumstances, which he often managed to steer in his own favour by constantly weaving or cultivating relations with powerful figures in the imperial administration, no

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 85-90. With regard to Valdés's influence on the religious trajectory of cardinal Gonzaga, see Nicola Avanzini, 'Tra il cardinale Contarini e Juan de Valdés: la parabola religiosa di Ercole Gonzaga (1535-1542)', *Bollettino della Società di studi valdesi*, 114 (1997), pp. 3-35.

⁴⁶ This correspondence is published in José F. Montesinos (ed.), *Cartas inéditas de Juan de Valdés al cardenal Gonzaga* (Madrid: S. Aguirre, 1931).

⁴⁷ See Firpo's *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, p. LVIII.

⁴⁸ "Diez años, los mejores de mi vida, que gasté en palacios y cortes". Juan de Valdés, *Diálogo de la lengua* (Madrid: J. Martín Alegria, 1860), p. 181.

⁴⁹ See Firpo's *Introduzione* to Valdés's, *Alfabeto Cristiano*, pp. LVIII-LX; Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 97. Only seven letters of the correspondence between Valdés and Cobos have survived. They were published by Benedetto Croce in the appendix 2 to his edition of Juan de Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano. Dialogo con Giulia Gonzaga* (Bari: Laterza, 1938).

matter which political faction they belonged to. This also accounts, at least in part, for the large number of people whom he managed to attract to his Neapolitan sodality, as well as for the remarkable success of their proselytism.

Francisco de los Cobos had already served Ferdinand the Catholic as responsible for Castilian finance and later for the administration of the Indies. He had maintained similar roles at the beginning of Charles V's reign, but was soon appointed secretary of state. The supervision of all diplomatic matters contributed to making him the most influential imperial adviser together with his great rival Mercurino of Gattinara.⁵⁰ Following Gattinara's death in 1530 and the disgrace of the Spanish inquisitor general Alonso Manrique, Cobos and his ally Juan de Tavera (who would become archbishop of Toledo in 1534, thus de facto replacing Manrique as inquisitor general) tried to get rid of the Erasmian faction that had supported Mercurino of Gattinara at court. Among them were the Valdés brothers, Juan and Alfonso, whose humanistic dialogues of the late 1520s received now more attention from the Spanish Inquisition.⁵¹ Cobos's power within the entourage of the emperor continued to raise, reaching its peak during the 1538 negotiations that led to the Truce of Nice between Charles V and Francis I.⁵² On this occasion, as has been noted above, Pole was also present at Nice, where he accompanied the pope and had the opportunity to meet the emperor for the first time. In spite of his reservations about Juan de Valdés's marked anti-French stances, Cobos thought that Valdés's intellectual credentials would be of some help in administering the Italian affairs of state. For this reason, he granted Valdés remunerative positions that were not excessively demanding.⁵³ Thus the decrease in Valdés's political commitments gave him more time to

⁵⁰ See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 43.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 43-46. In Juan's case, it was his *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* (*Dialogue on Christian Doctrine*, published in 1529) that caused him trouble. As for Alfonso, the works that were subject to the close scrutiny of the Inquisition were the *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* (*Dialogue on the Events Occurred in Rome*) and the *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón* (*Dialogue of Mercury and Charon*). The former work was written in 1527, soon after the sack of Rome, in the attempt to distance the emperor from the plunder of his troops, which are described as the divine punishment for the sins of the city and, in particular, of the pope and the clergy. The latter dialogue was published in 1529 and is less sharp in tone than its predecessor, given the incipient signs of a rapprochement between the emperor and the pope. Both of Alfonso's dialogues were published together (although erroneously ascribed to Juan de Valdés) as *Dos diálogos escritos por Juan de Valdés, ahora cuidadosamente reimpresos*, [ed. Luis Usó y Río, Madrid], 1850 («Reformistas antiguos españoles», vol. IV). For separate editions, see Alfonso de Valdés, *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma*, Rosa Navarro Durán (ed.) (Madrid: Cátedra, 1992); Alfonso de Valdés, *Diálogo de Mercurio y Carón*, Joseph V. Ricapito (ed.) (Madrid: Castalia, 1993).

⁵² See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 97.

⁵³ See *ibid.*, pp. 96-98.

devote himself to his Neapolitan sodality and to the writing of his religious works, in which he developed the immense fund of knowledge which he had accumulated over the preceding years.

2.2. Between Alcalá de Henares and the Alumbrados

The enormous range of his relationships, as well as the variety of experiences he had, allowed Valdés to develop an intellectual and religious eclecticism that closely resembles, in many ways, what I termed Pole's radical eclecticism. In both cases, the driving force behind this attitude lay in a common sensitivity to the imperative need for Church reform, which was shared by many people at all social levels. The Church's failure to give satisfactory answers to this widespread need for reform left open a large space of uncertainty within which an original religious experimentation grew, thus producing a fusion of very different ideas. For at least two decades, therefore, Luther's message circulated in an already varied and fluid situation where the reactions were not limited to the choice between acceptance or rejection, but included a whole range of nuances that often led to unexpected outcomes. In this period, drastic decisions such as that of the Benedictine monk Francesco Negri, who had fled to Strasbourg, remained rather isolated cases. "Everybody says the same – admitted Francesco's brother in a letter to their father –, namely that Martin's works are founded on the Scripture and that, if these people could, they would willingly buy some of them. Does it follow, therefore, that they want to go and visit him? Of course not".⁵⁴ His words exemplify well the degree of autonomy that usually characterised the reception of Luther's message in the territories where the Protestant Reformation did not take root in any political institution, as had happened instead in many German principalities.

During his formative years, in particular on two occasions, Juan de Valdés happened to come into contact with different people and groups in contexts where the free concoction of diverse religious strands was especially vibrant and stimulating. In 1526 Valdés enrolled at the university of Alcalá de Henares,⁵⁵ which had been founded in 1508 by cardinal Cisneros

⁵⁴ Quoted in Proserpi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 36. The letter is dated 18 February 1524.

⁵⁵ See Márquez, *Los alumbrados*, p. 218.

and had rapidly become famous as a centre for biblical philology. As has been repeatedly pointed out, scholars at Alcalá felt free to combine the thought of Erasmus, the doctrines of Luther and the ideas of the Spanish *alumbrados*.⁵⁶ During her Inquisition trial of 1532, María de Cazalla declared, for instance, that the world “has to be reformed by Erasmus through his doctrine” [“lo ha de reformar Erasmo con su doctrina”] and that Erasmus himself “should be canonised” [“se avía a canonizar”]. Luther too, however, “must be a good man” [“devía ser buen onbre”], and the *alumbrados*, for their part, were “men of divine spirit” [“ombres de espíritu divino”].⁵⁷ As a matter of fact, María de Cazalla had succeeded the Franciscan tertiary Isabel de la Cruz – following Isabel’s arrest in 1524 – as the leading figure of the *alumbrados* in Guadalajara. Valdés’s *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana* is the epitome of the peculiar blend of different religious influences which were merged at the university of Alcalá. It should be noted, however, that while the *Dialogue* uses explicit words of praise for Erasmus, scholars have gradually detected, since Marcel Bataillon’s discovery of this work in 1525, also the presence of a great deal of passages which Valdés translated (without citing the sources) from the writings of Luther, Melancton and Oecolampadius.⁵⁸

The stimulating environment which the young Valdés had found at Alcalá was not completely new to him, for a few years earlier, between 1523 and 1524, he had already had the opportunity to associate with the intellectually lively and heterogeneous group that gathered in the town of Escalona (Castilla-La Mancha), at the court of Diego López Pacheco, marquis of Villena. In 1523, with the promise of paying a good salary, don Diego had invited to his palace Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, a very popular lay preacher and father of ten.⁵⁹ The court of the marquis of Villena at Escalona has always been considered as a centre of gravity of the movement of the *alumbrados* although, admittedly, the term *alumbrados* has been loaded with ambiguity since its very origins. As an Inquisition category, it applied generically to

⁵⁶ See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, pp. 27-28; Firpo, *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, p. XXXIII.

⁵⁷ Milagros Ortega Costa, *Proceso de la Inquisición contra María de Cazalla* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1978), pp. 82, 78, 171.

⁵⁸ See Carlos Gilly, ‘Juan de Valdés: Übersetzer und Bearbeiter von Luthers Schriften in seinem Diálogo de Doctrina’, *Archiv für Reformationgeschichte*, 74 (1983), pp. 257-305; Alberto Aubert, ‘Valdesianesimo ed evangelismo italiano. Alcuni studi recenti’, *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 41 (1987), pp. 152-175; Carlo Ossola’s ‘Introduzione storica’ to his edition of Valdés, *Matteo*, pp. 11-93, especially pp. 42-49.

⁵⁹ See Stefania Pastore, *Una herejía española. Conversos, alumbrados e Inquisición (1449-1559)* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2010), p. 167; Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, pp. 23-24.

those who stressed the importance of the individual illumination of the spirit rather than the constrictions imposed by the Church. Thus the category of *alumbrados* came to designate religious tendencies that shared anti-institutional aspects.⁶⁰ Following the Inquisition edict of Toledo (1525), Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz was one of the first people arrested on the newly created charge of *alumbradismo*. During his trial, however, he rejected this charge with disdain by claiming that *alumbrados* was a pejorative term which the people commonly used when referring to the Franciscan friar Juan de Olmillos and his group of followers in Escalona. As opposed to Olmillos's doctrine of *recogimiento*, which laid great emphasis on visions, revelations and ecstasies, Isabel de la Cruz and her disciple Alcaraz had fostered the opposed notion of *dejamiento*, which entailed abandoning oneself completely to the love of God.⁶¹ In the course of other trials, similarly to Alcaraz, Isabel de la Cruz and María de Cazalla refused resolutely to be labelled as *alumbrados* by playing on the ambiguities of the term. Alcaraz's contempt for those who, in his opinion, should be correctly labelled as *alumbrados* was also shared by the humanist Juan de Vergara, who was in correspondence with Erasmus. Between 1526 and 1527, in Alcalá de Henares, even Ignatius of Loyola underwent three Inquisition trials on charge of *alumbradismo*. His trials were part of the series of inquiries that followed the edict of Toledo of 1525. On this occasion, Ignatius and his companions were prohibited from conducting public or private apostolate. In the summer of 1527 Ignatius was arrested and tried in Salamanca. Also in this case he was released, even if further restrictions were imposed on his freedom to teach and preach. These episodes of Ignatius's life, however, still remain obscure, owing to the scarcity of documentation and to the enduring reticence of Jesuit historiography, that has always tended to downplay both the historical significance of these trials and Ignatius's association with the *alumbrados*.⁶²

It is not the purpose of this work to examine in detail the doctrinal profile of the *alumbrados*, which has been the subject of many historical studies.⁶³ What matters here is two

⁶⁰ See Pastore, *Una herejía española*, p. 166.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, p. 167; Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, pp. 22, 24.

⁶² See Guido Mongini, «*Ad Christi similitudinem*». Ignazio di Loyola e i primi gesuiti tra eresia e ortodossia. *Studi sulle origini della Compagnia di Gesù* (Alessandria: dell'Orso, 2011), especially pp. 45-81.

⁶³ Apart from the dated – but still valuable – Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, other essential studies on the *alumbrados* are Márquez, *Los alumbrados* and Pastore, *Una herejía española*. Pastore's book has an extensive bibliography on this theme (pp. 351-395). See also Firpo, *Tra alumbrados e «spirituali»*, in particular pp. 46-47, note 159, for a detailed bibliography; Firpo, *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, especially pp. XXII-XXXII on the *alumbrados* and pp. CLXXIX-CCI for bibliography.

distinguishing features that pertain to the social composition of this heterogeneous group. In the first place, there can not be any doubt, at the current stage of research, about the *converso* nature of the *alumbrado* movement. Virtually all the people who were investigated by the Inquisition on this charge belonged to families of *conversos*, that is to say descendants of the so-called “new Christians”, those Spanish Jews who had been compelled, after the pogrom of 1391, to convert to Catholicism. Isabel de la Cruz, the leader of the first group of *alumbrados*, was a *conversa*. So were, among others, Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, María de Cazalla, Juan de Vergara and Gaspar de Bedoya, a priest from Guadalajara that was one of the first to be condemned by the Inquisition.⁶⁴ Juan de Valdés too had one *converso* paternal grandmother, while his mother, María de Barrera, had three *converso* grandparents.⁶⁵ The considerable *converso* presence among the *alumbrados* indicates, on the one hand, that there still existed, at this time, a high intermarriage rate between families of *conversos* and their failure to fully integrate into a society dominated by the *cristianos viejos* (old Christians). It must also be remembered that all the above-mentioned people had directly experienced the tensions of the first generation that ensued the 1492 expulsion of Jews from Spain. On the other hand, the widespread *conversos*’ suspicion towards what they regarded as superstitious religious rituals (performed by the old Christians) certainly contributed to their attraction for the ideas of the *alumbrados*, who heavily criticised traditional religious precepts, masses, vows, pilgrimages, indulgences, papal bulls, the cult of the Virgin Mary and of the saints.⁶⁶ This kind of criticism had preceded Luther’s protest, given that as early as 1512 Isabel de la Cruz had begun to preach in the area of Guadalajara.⁶⁷

Isabel’s leadership in the group of Guadalajara was by no means an exception among the *alumbrados*. The presence of charismatic female figures or *beatas*, on the contrary, was a constant in such circles. As such, it represents the second important feature that is directly related to the social composition of the *alumbrados*. As was mentioned above, the role performed by Isabel de la Cruz in Guadalajara had been taken over by María de Cazalla. The latter had already associated not only with Isabel, but also with another *beata*, Francisca

⁶⁴ See Pastore, *Una herejía española*. p. 171.

⁶⁵ See Crews, *Twilight of the Renaissance*, p. 9.

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*, p. 20; Firpo, *Introduzione to Valdés, Alfabeto cristiano*, pp. XXVII-XXVIII.

⁶⁷ See Lu Ann Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore-London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), pp. 7-8.

Hernández, who devoted herself to an eccentric hybrid between prophetic predictions, healing and the practise of *dejamiento*. After 1519, Francisca had moved to the house of María's cousin, Pedro de Cazalla.⁶⁸ Among her followers were noblemen as well as scholars and high-ranking prelates, such as cardinal Francisco de Quiñones, who would later become Minister General of the Franciscans.⁶⁹ It has been observed that the typical emphasis which was laid on the interior certitude (reached thorough the spirit's revelation) gave these women more freedom to communicate their inner religious feelings and convictions. This also enabled them to circumvent, to a certain extent, the rules and constraints imposed by a male-dominated ecclesiastical hierarchy.⁷⁰

2.3. Prominent Women in Naples and Viterbo

This characteristic has a special relevance for the analysis of the formation and the structure of both of the Valdesian circle in Naples and of Pole's *Ecclesia viterbiensis*, where aristocratic women rose to prominence, although not as leaders. In Naples, the countess Giulia Gonzaga became Valdés's favourite disciple, while in Viterbo Pole established a special spiritual relationship with the marquise of Pescara, Vittoria Colonna. The event that contributed to bringing together Valdés and Giulia Gonzaga was the death of her husband Vespasiano Colonna (1528) and the subsequent legal issues in which Giulia (who came from a secondary branch of the Gonzaga family in Lombardy) became involved to defend her right to inheritance. On this occasion, Valdés became her legal adviser, but their relationship soon evolved towards a spiritual bond. In 1536, he dedicated her his *Alfabeto cristiano* (*Christian Alphabet*), which is written in the form of a dialogue between Giulia and Juan.⁷¹ Giulia Gonzaga was not the only female presence in the Neapolitan circle, which attracted many other women of the Italian and Spanish aristocracy. Among them were Isabella Villamarino de Cardona – the wife of Ferrante Sanseverino, prince of Salerno⁷² – and Isabella Breseño (or

⁶⁸ See *ibid.*

⁶⁹ See Firpo, *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, p. LXIII.

⁷⁰ See Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 97-117.

⁷¹ See Firpo's critical edition: Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, pp. 5-111.

⁷² On Ferrante Sanseverino and his wife, see *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 815.

Brisegna), who belonged to a noble Castilian family that had moved to Naples. The latter Isabella was a close friend of Giulia Gonzaga and associated with the most radical disciples of Valdés. After her secret abjuration, in 1557 she decided to flee to Tübingen, where she met the former bishop of Koper, Pier Paolo Vergerio. She eventually settled in Switzerland and lived on the money which Giulia Gonzaga sent her.⁷³

There is currently no evidence, instead, that Vittoria Colonna associated with Valdés in Naples. During this period, however, she was in contact with a great admirer of Valdés, that is to say Bernardino Ochino, who was then the most famous preacher in Italy and would be elected (in 1538) Vicar General of the Capuchin order, before fleeing to Geneva in 1542. Ochino provided spiritual guidance to Vittoria Colonna until she met Pole, whom she immediately began to regard as her “father and spiritual master with regard to religious matters”. During the course of her conversations with friends, in her letters to cardinal Morone and even in her poems, the marquise never missed an opportunity to “praise and exalt beyond the stars the doctrine and sanctity of this cardinal”,⁷⁴ who deserved great credit for having given her back “her well-being” by freeing her from “idle fantasies”,⁷⁵ her “chaos of ignorance” and “labyrinth of errors”.⁷⁶ Vittoria Colonna mentioned for the first time her meetings with Pole in her letter of 15 February 1540 to Margaret of Angoulême, queen of Navarre.⁷⁷ Pole and Colonna started to see each other more often when the latter, in March

⁷³ See *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/2, pp. 748-749 (LXXII questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 2 January 1567). For a biographical profile of Isabella Breseño, see *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 22-24.

⁷⁴ “Essa signora l’haveva per padre et maestro spirituale ne le cose della religione, sì come è cosa notoria, et la medesima lo diceva alli amici suoi che l’andavano a visitare, lodando et inalzando sopra le stelle la dottrina et la santità di questo cardinale” (*Informatio* of Giovan Battista Scotti; presumably Rome, March 1551). *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 20. In a sonnet of her *Rime spirituali*, Colonna portrayed Pole as “the divine Pole, / who goes above the stars proud and alone” (“l’divin Polo, / che va sopra le stelle altero e solo”). Quoted *ibid.*, note 42.

⁷⁵ Thus did cardinal Morone write in his *Confessio*, when he was a prisoner in Castel Sant’Angelo (Rome, 18 June 1557): “La maggior parte delli suoi ragionamenti [of Vittoria Colonna] era o delle cose di stato, delle quali faceva professione grande, o del reverendissimo Polo, dal qual mi disse una volta c’haveva ricevuto la salute sua, perché l’haveva firmata et ritirata da molte vane fantasie”. *Processo Morone*, I, NE, p. 469.

⁷⁶ The quotations are from the letter which Vittoria Colonna wrote to Morone on 22 December 1542. It is published in Vittoria Colonna, *Carteggio*, Ermanno Ferrero and Giuseppe Müller (eds.), II edizione con supplemento, a cura di Domenico Tordi (Torino: Loescher, 1892), pp. 272-273 (p. 273: “Vostra Signoria reverendissima [Morone] avria visto il caos d’ignorantia ove io era et il labirinto di errori ov’io passeggiava sicura, vestita di quell’oro di luce, che stride senza star saldo al paragone della fede né affinarsi al fuoco della vera carità, essendo continuo col corpo in moto per trovare quiete e con la mente in agitatione per havere pace”). The critical edition of this letter can be found in Pagano and Ranieri, *Nuovi documenti*, pp. 139-142 (pp. 140-141).

⁷⁷ Colonna’s correspondence with Pier Paolo Vergerio and Margaret of Navarre clearly reveals the change in her religious attitudes, a change which she attributed to Pole’s crucial influence. See Colonna, *Carteggio*, pp. 185-188 (Vittoria Colonna to Margaret of Navarre; 15 February 1540), 200-206 (Vittoria Colonna to Margaret of

1541, decided to settle in the Dominican convent of San Paolo in Orvieto. At that time Vittoria's brother, Ascanio Colonna, had engaged in the so-called "Salt War" with the papal troops, and Vittoria had consequently opted to leave Rome, in order to avoid the tensions which her presence there could arouse.⁷⁸ At the convent of San Paolo, Vittoria received regular visits from Pole, who appeared to care deeply about their privacy, as Pietro Carnesecchi would later recount, during his trial:

Neither I nor others could grasp the details of their conversations, because they spoke together without witnesses and without arbitrators. Despite the fact that Flaminio, Priuli and I accompanied His most illustrious Signory [Pole] to the convent, we did not intervene, therefore, in their conversations, but temporised among us in the church or nearby.⁷⁹

Pole's preoccupation was not excessive, for he must know that Vittoria Colonna was kept under surveillance. Indeed, with the complicity of the bishop of Orvieto (Niccolò Ridolfi), the governor of the town, Brunamonte Rossi, recounted to cardinal Farnese the information he had been able to collect about her.⁸⁰ An analogous prudence is detectable in the letters which

Navarre; 1540), 289-292 (Margaret of Navarre to Vittoria Colonna; end of 1544-beginning of 1545) and pp. 191-197 (Pier Paolo Vergerio to Vittoria Colonna; June 1540), 199-200 (Pier Paolo Vergerio to Vittoria Colonna; second half of 1540).

⁷⁸ In February 1540, pope Paul III had imposed a new tax on salt in the papal territories that had previously been exempted, among which were the areas controlled by the Colonna family. On the basis of an old privilege granted by Martin V (Ottone Colonna), Ascanio refused to comply with the levy. In February 1541, he did not go to Rome, where he had been summoned by the pontiff. On the contrary, in the following month he gathered his troops and started the war, which ended two months later with Ascanio's defeat and the fall of the stronghold of Paliano. Ascanio was banned from the papal states and fled to Naples, where he became constable of the Reign (he was allowed to return to Rome only after Paul III's death, when Julius III overturned the conviction of Ascanio). In the meantime, the Colonnas had lost all their domains in Lazio, which had been acquired by the Apostolic Camera. See Giorgio Patrizi's entry *Vittoria Colonna* in *DBI*, XXVII, pp. 448-457, in particular p. 451. From October 1541 to the summer of 1544, Vittoria Colonna resided at the convent of Santa Caterina in Viterbo. See *ibid.*, pp. 452-453.

⁷⁹ "I particolari di lor ragionamenti non poteva intendere, né io né altri, perché parlavano insieme senza arbitri et senza testimonii ché, siben il Flaminio, il Priuli et io accompagnavamo Sua Signoria illustrissima al monasterio, non intervenivamo perhò alli loro colloqui, ma ce intertenevamo da noi o in chiesa o lì intorno". *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/2, p. 431 (XLII questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 10 November 1566).

⁸⁰ On 9 April 1541, for instance, Rossi informed cardinal Farnese about the visit of a man who, according to the information provided by the bishop of Orvieto, had spoken with Vittoria Colonna "on the matters of the war" ("ha parlato con dicta signora marchesa et fermatosi et alloggiato una sera con li servitori di dicta signora et ha menato solo un altro cavallo con esso; et mi dice il vescovo che è venuto solo per ragguagliar Sua Excellentia delle cose della guerra"). On 10 April, the governor related in detail the contents of two letters (from the emperor and from the marquis of Vasto) which he did not manage to see. Colonna had shown them, however, to Ridolfi, who said that they concerned the issue of Ascanio Colonna ("le do avviso che, parlando con il vescovo d'Orvieto alli giorni proximi, ho carpito che la prefata signora marchesa, quale dimostra molto confidar in Sua Signoria reverenda, li ha mostrate due lettere: una ricevuta dalla Cesarea Maestà dello imperatore et l'altra dal marchese

were written in these years by Pole, his secretaries, collaborators and members of his household. The *spirituali* were conscious that actually most of them were under surveillance or even provoked by the agents of Gian Pietro Carafa,⁸¹ who could rely on a vast network of informers and spies. Shortly after his foundation of the order of the Theatines in 1524, Carafa had begun to exploit the Congregation of Clerks Regular as a sort of pre-inquisitorial structure.⁸² This would be proudly stated in Carafa's apologetic biography (*Vita et gesti di Giovan Pietro Caraffa, cioè di Paolo IV pontefice massimo*), written in the early XVII century by Antonio Caracciolo:

Our fathers [Theatines] discovered the heresies in Naples, our order being [...] a bitter persecutor of heresies, as well as committed to the defence of the Catholic faith [...]. One must be aware that Rainiero Gualardo⁸³ and the physician Antonio Capone, owing to their association with Valdés and Ochino, and given that they used to confess to our [fathers] in San Paolo, aroused their suspicions. Ours therefore asked those secret heretics all they knew. In this way, our fathers gained an understanding of the bad seed which they disseminated, as well as of the secret circles of men and women. Once these were discovered and reported to the Theatine cardinal [Carafa] in Rome, all those heretic leaders fled Naples.⁸⁴

del Guasto [...]. Questa è la substantia delle due lettere. Io non l'ho viste, ma tanto mi ha dicto il prefato monsignor d'Orvieto che l'ha viste"). Quoted in Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole*, pp. 30-31.

⁸¹ "Non hanno di far altro che provocare le persone con quattro loro ricche mal composte et peggio scritte". Thus did Alvise Priuli write to Beccadelli on 10 June 1542, when he was in Rome. Priuli was also "amazed at such a long silence from you" ("maravigliato del vostro sì longo silentio"). During his short stay in Rome with Pole, Priuli had not received any communication from Beccadelli. He was therefore afraid that the previous letters he had sent to Beccadelli (in which he announced his imminent arrival in Rome) had got lost. Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Ital.*, C. 25, cc. 203r-204v.

⁸² See Vanni, «*Fare diligente inquisitione*», especially pp. 9-18, 31-74, 81-104, 163-177. In this study, Vanni shows how the controversial role played by Carafa in the foundation and organisation of the Theatines was deliberately downplayed by Theatine historiography, which attributed excessive importance to the figure of Saint Cajetan, as though he were almost the only founder of the order.

⁸³ For a biographical note on Ranieri Gualano (or Gualandi), who was a Neapolitan nobleman and a relative of Carafa, see *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 69-71, note 30.

⁸⁴ "I nostri padri [teatini] scoprirono l'heresie in Napoli, essendo il nostro ordine [...] acerbo persecutore de l'heresie, et che fa professione di difender la fede cattolica [...]. S'ha da sapere che Rainiero Gualardo et Antonio Capone medico, per la prattica che ebbero con Valdés et con l'Ochino, e perché si confessavano da i nostri [padri] a San Paolo, però i nostri, che ne stavano sospetti, si fecero riferire da loro tutto ciò che intendevano da quegli occulti heretici. In questo modo vennero a conoscere i nostri il mal seme che coloro seminavano et le secrete conventicole d'huomini et di donne le quali, da loro scoperte et scritte al cardinal Teatino in Roma, quei capi heretici se ne fuggirono via tutti da Napoli". This passage is quoted in Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, p. 171, note 25. Cf. Vanni, «*Fare diligente inquisitione*», pp. 179-199.

During the Lent of 1540, it was Gaetano of Thiene himself who denounced Peter Martyr Vermigli to the viceroy of Naples, Pedro de Toledo. As a result, the viceroy forbade Vermigli from preaching.⁸⁵ It was also the Theatines who denounced first Bernardino Ochino for “vomiting heretical propositions in the church of San Giovanni Maggiore” and for “spreading many things against the purgatory, the indulgences, the ecclesiastical laws on fasting, as well as against the authority of the pope and of the Church’s prelates”.⁸⁶ Consequently, the *spirituali* were forced to exercise extreme caution in all kinds of communication and especially in their correspondence, given the looming danger of interception of their letters.⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, their correspondence of the early 1540s abounds with exhortations to greater prudence and with recommendations for the selection of trustworthy couriers for the delivery of sensitive missives.⁸⁸ Alvise Priuli’s letters, in particular, reveal in this period an increasing preoccupation with the frequent cases of failed delivery of his or Pole’s letters, which often

⁸⁵ See Philip McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy. An Anatomy of Apostasy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 165. An arrest warrant was also issued against Vermigli, who decided to fly Naples and move to Switzerland. On Vermigli, see also the collections of essays *Peter Martyr Vermigli and the European Reformations: Semper Reformanda*, Frank A. James III (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Jason Zuidema, *Peter Martyr Vermigli (1499-1562) and the Outward Instruments of Divine Grace* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008); Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, and Frank A. James III (eds.), *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁸⁶ Thus did Antonio Caracciolo write about this episode, in his biography of pope Paul IV: “L’Occhino nel 1536 cominciò a vomitare anch’egli alcune proposizioni heretiche nella chiesa di San Giovanni Maggiore, dove predicò la quaresima; ma perché con l’austera vita che mostrava, con l’habito asprissimo, con il gridar contra vitii ricopriva il suo veleno, non si poté all’hora, se non da pochi, conoscere la sua volpina fraude. Pure vi fu alcuno che se ne accorse, e fra gli altri, anzi i primi (per quanto ho inteso da’ nostri vecchi), furono li nostri santi padri don Gaetano e don Giovanni, li quali poi più chiaramente se ne accorsero nel 1539, quando l’Occhino, predicando nel pulpito del duomo, andava spargendo molte cose contro il purgatorio, contra le indulgenze, contra le leggi ecclesiastiche del digiuno e contra l’autorità del papa e de’ prelati della Chiesa”. Quoted in Fragnito, ‘Gli «spirituali» e la fuga di Bernardino Ochino’. p. 143, note 7.

⁸⁷ On 18 July 1542, for example, Priuli informed Ludovico Beccadelli that Pole had preferred to wait for a trustworthy groom to send his letters to Contarini: “Monsignore [Pole] ha avuto chara l’occasione di questo palafreniero per mandar le lettere che Sua Signoria scrive al reverendissimo Signor Legato sicure, et per tal rispetto ha tardato a mandarle”. Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Ital.*, C. 25, f. 214v; cf. ff. 213r-214v.

⁸⁸ See Fragnito, ‘Gli «spirituali» e la fuga di Bernardino Ochino’, pp. 144-145; Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole*, pp. 29-32. As early as June 1540, Pier Paolo Vergerio (who was then in France with cardinal Ippolito II d’Este), expressed similar worries in a letter to Vittoria Colonna: “I have composed four discourses on the matters of Germany and I will not send them now to Your Excellency, because I do not have a secure way. I fear to send them through the insecure ones, having there expressed something that pertains to a good Christian, that is to say freely and in God’s honour; and this is not appreciated by the world, given that the latter’s ways are different and sometimes opposite to the ones of former” (“Ho composto quattro discorsi sulle materie di Germania et non gli mando hora alla Eccellentia Vostra, perché io non ho via sicura et temo mandarli per le incerte, havendo là dentro espresso qualche cosa da buon cristiano, cioè liberamente ad honor di Dio; et ciò non piace al mondo, essendo diverse et alcuna fiata contrarie queste da quelle vie”). Colonna, *Carteggio*, p. 193.

led him to fear that “they had an unfortunate end”.⁸⁹ In such cases, Pole and his associates deemed more appropriate to address delicate issues by word of mouth.⁹⁰

3.1. *The Power of the Word*

The *spirituali*’s worries about the interception of their letters, however, was not the only reason why they resorted so systematically to oral communication and to face-to-face conversations. In this respect too, the experience which many members of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* had shared in Valdés’s Neapolitan sodality had a significant impact in steering them towards the choice and the way of using specific modes of communication for their activities of propaganda. A great deal of the fascination which Valdés had exerted for them was certainly rooted in the powerful magnetic force of his oratory, his gestures and his gaze. These were the privileged means of Valdés’s spiritual leadership, which he exercised mainly through direct communication with his followers.⁹¹ Hence the great relevance which Valdés attributed to preaching as a popular medium that allowed to reach a wide variety of people. “He enlightened some of the most famous preachers in Italy; I know this because I have spoken with them”. Thus did the exile Celio Secondo Curione write in the introduction to Valdés’s *Hundred and Ten Divine Considerations*, which Curione published in Basel in

⁸⁹ See what Priuli wrote to Beccadelli on 1st May 1542: “On Holy Friday a man from Brescia left on foot with some letters which Monsignor [Pole] wrote to the cardinal [Contarini] on the matter of friar Ambrosio Polito. Since they had not arrived yet on 24 April, we fear that they had an unfortunate end” (“Il venerdì santo parti de qui un bressano a piedi con lettere che monsignor [Pole] scriveva al cardinal [Contarini] in materia di frate Ambrosio Polito, le quale, non essendo arrivate fino alli 24 d’aprile, dubitamo non siino mal capitate”). In the same letter, Priuli complained he had not received any more letter from Galeazzo Florimonte, who had instead written to him more than once. Priuli’s fear was the same: “Dubito le sue non siano mal capitate”. Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Ital.*, C. 25, ff. 196r-198v.

⁹⁰ On 25 August, Priuli expressed again his worries about some letters: “On the 14th we replied to yours of the 11th, relating to the matter of our Signor vice-legate and to Vincenzo [Gheri]. Our letters left on the 15th, by means of a man who went to the post. Given that you have not received them until the 19th, we doubt whether they had an unfortunate end. If this is the case, these sirs will answer about everything in detail by word of mouth, therefore I will not tell you anything more about this (“Alle vostre di XI, scritte in materia del Signor Vicelegato nostro et di Vincenzo [Gheri], rispondessimo alli 14 et le lettere partirono alli 15 per uno che andava in posta, onde non le havendo Voi ricevute fino alli 19, stamo in dubbio siano mal capitate. Quando ciò fusse, questi signori a bocca vi replicheranno il tutto particolarmente, et però altro non ve ne dirò”). Quoted in Simoncelli, *Il caso Reginald Pole*, p. 30, note 47.

⁹¹ See Firpo, *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, p. LXV.

1550.⁹² His assertion finds confirmation in the words of Pietro Carnesecchi, who had been a friend of Valdés since the time they worked together in Rome, at the papal court of Clement VII. When they met again in Naples, Carnesecchi was deeply impressed by the metamorphosis of Valdés. The person whom he knew to be a “modest and well-bred courtier”, “a gentleman of sword and cape”, had actually turned into a man that “gave himself all to the spirit and was all intent on studies and on the holy Scripture”. Carnesecchi would not have been inclined to give much weight to Valdés’s spiritual metamorphosis, had he not seen that his Spanish friend was held in the highest esteem by Bernardino Ochino, whose preaching in Naples excited then “everybody’s admiration”. According to Carnesecchi, Ochino “professed almost to draw the theme of many of his homilies from Valdés, by means of a bit of paper which he [Valdés] used to send him the evening before the morning when he had to preach”.⁹³ One year earlier, through another “bit of paper” that contained the text of one of his *Considerations* (on the illumination of the spirit), Valdés had also managed to contact Bartolomé Carranza, a Spanish priest of the Dominican order who was then in Rome to receive the title of doctor of theology.⁹⁴ Carranza and Valdés had already met each other at the university of Alcalá. The ecclesiastical career of Carranza would come to an abrupt interruption the same year in which he was appointed archbishop of Toledo. Soon after, he was denounced to the Inquisition, which started an endless trial, forcing Carranza to spend almost the rest of his life in prison.⁹⁵

⁹² “Egli ha dato lume ad alcuni de’ più famosi predicatori d’Italia, il che io so per haver conversato coi medesimi”. Valdés, *Considerationi*, p. [a6r].

⁹³ “Anchoraché io havesse cognosciuto Ioanne Valdesio a Roma insino al tempo di papa Clemente santa memoria [...], non posso dire d’haverlo cognosciuto come theologo si non l’anno 1540 in Napoli, perché a Roma non sapevo che attendesse al studio delle lettere sacre, ma solo lo conoscevo per cortigiano modesto et ben creato et come tale l’amavo assai, sì che la pratica et conversatione che io hebbi poi seco a Napoli fu una continuatione dell’amicitia fatta a Roma. Ma dove prima se poteva dire che fusse una amicitia carnale, cominciò a Napoli alhora diventare spirituale, perché lo trovai tutto dato allo spirito et tutto intento alli studii della Scrittura sacra. Il che però non saria bastato a fare che io li havesse dato tanto credito come detti, essendo lui gentilhomio di spada et cappa et diventato appresso di me theologo a un tratto, se non fusse stato il conto che ne vedevo fare da fra Bernardino Ochino, che predicava alhora a Napoli con admiratione d’ogniuno et faceva professione di pigliare quasi il thema di molte sue prediche da Valdesio mediante una carticella che lui li mandava la sera inanzi alla matina che doveva predicare”. *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/1, p. 143 (XI questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 23 July 1566).

⁹⁴ See Firpo, *Introduzione* to Valdés, *Alfabeto cristiano*, p. CVI.

⁹⁵ On the trial of Bartolomé Carranza, see José Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, *Fray Bartolomé Carranza. Documentos históricos*, 6 vols. (Madrid: Real Accademia de la Historia, 1962-1981). On Carranza and Pole, see José Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, *Fray Bartolomé Carranza y el cardenal Pole. Un navarro en la restauración católica de Inglaterra (1554-1558)* (Pamplona: Editorial Aranzadi, 1977).

Personal conversations and preaching continued to play a key role in Pole's *Ecclesia viterbiensis*. On the occasion of the Inquisition trials against Giovanni Morone and Pietro Carnesecchi, numerous witnesses recounted the frequent entrancing conversations which Pole used to have in the Rocca of Viterbo, where he resided: "He spoke wonderfully, to the point of [...] leaving people in suspense",⁹⁶ said the Dominican friar Angelo Cattani of Diacceto. As a matter of fact, Pole never seemed so unrelenting in his attempts to persuade other people of his opinion on justification as when speaking with Dominican friars. This was the case, for example, with Zenobio de' Medici, who came from the convent of San Marco in Florence.⁹⁷ Another Florentine Dominican who was in close contact with the circle of Viterbo during the early 1540s, Bernardo Bartoli, would later declare that Pole "really strove to persuade him [Zenobio] of this opinion on the new justification".⁹⁸ According to Pietro Carnesecchi, Marcantonio Flaminio and other friars (including Zenobio) even went as far as to often come to blows over "the role of works in our justification".⁹⁹ It is no coincidence that so many friars of the Order of Preachers figured among Pole's interlocutors. Bartoli declared that he was frequently given instruction on the content of his homilies, which should adhere, in Pole's view, to "the pure and simple Gospel" (as the apostles had done), without mixing "other philosophical doctrines and natural reasons".¹⁰⁰ Moreover, Pole strongly advised him to "preach this justice of Christ without scandal, without destroying anything, as though he meant to say that whoever know this truth by himself frees himself from all errors".¹⁰¹ In 1541, by order of Pole, Bartoli was appointed as Lent preacher in Viterbo, but had to inform Pole about the content of his first homily, which concerned penance. The doctrine expounded

⁹⁶ *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 396 (see above, pp. 88-89).

⁹⁷ On Zenobio de' Medici, see *ibid.*, p. 75, note 48.

⁹⁸ "Mi ricordo che, parlando con frate Zenobio de' Medici de l'ordine di predicatori, assai si affatigò il cardinale [Pole] di persuaderli questa opinione della giustificazione nuova". *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76 (deposition of Bernardo Bartoli; San Gimignano, 7-10 July 1555).

⁹⁹ "[Flaminio] era ben spesso alle mane con qualcheuno sopra l'articolo della iustificatione, et maxime con qualche frate che non lo voleva intendere a suo modo [...]. Ne disputava con fra Zanobio de' Medici in Viterbo, con un monacho di san Benedecto da Sessa [Giovanni Evangelista da Sessa], alhora abbate di Santo Severino a Napoli [...]. Io non so altro, si non che la disputa era del attribuire più o mancho parte alle opere nella nostra iustificatione". *Processi Carnesecchi*, I, pp. 64-65 (III questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 16 May 1560).

¹⁰⁰ "[Pole] voleva ch'io predicassi il puro et semplice evangelio senz'altra cosa et che questa era la predicatione delli apostoli, et che non se mescolassi altre dottrine philosophice et ragioni naturali". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 114.

¹⁰¹ "Sua Signoria reverendissima non approbava queste expositioni di dottori, massimamente di santo Thomasso, persuadendomi ch'io stessi in su le parole del testo. Così anchora so che mi fece predicare in più luoghi, persuadendomi ch'io predicasse questa giustitia di Christo senza scandalo, senza destruere cosa nissuna, con dire che chi conosce questa verità da sé medesimo si lieva da tutti li errori". *Ibid.*, p. 76.

by Bartoli displeased Pole, who angrily reproached him for failing to mention “the benefit of Christ and the article of justification, interpreted in the Lutheran way; thus did the apostles do when they preached about penance”.¹⁰²

Since October 1541, Pole himself was working on a short tract concerning preaching, which he had agreed to send to Contarini.¹⁰³ In December, however, he informed Contarini that the subject had proved so vast that he did not have the courage to proceed. Nonetheless, he had taken this opportunity to rethink the matter, also motivated by the presence in Viterbo of a man who was “very zealous in the edification of the Christian people” and whose opinion was “very different from mine”.¹⁰⁴ This man was probably Nicolas Alfonso de Bobadilla, one of the first members of the Society of Jesus. At Pole’s request, Bobadilla had come to Viterbo as a preacher.¹⁰⁵ In the course of his stay, he recommended the Calabrian priest Apollonio Merenda (a former secretary of Pietro Bembo) for the position of chaplain in Pole’s household.¹⁰⁶ They had first met one year earlier, during Bobadilla’s pastoral visit (in his capacity as vicar of the bishop Fabio Arcella) in the diocese of Bisignano. Like many other works which were written in Viterbo by the *spirituali*, Pole’s tract on preaching certainly circulated among the members of his sodality, including Vittoria Colonna, who received the

¹⁰² “Nel 1541, trovandomi in Viterbo dove si trovava ancora Sua Signoria reverendissima la qual mi domandò, il lunedì del carnevale, havendo a predicare la quadragesima in quella città per ordine suo dato: «Che predicatione fate la prima mattina di quadragesima?», io gli risposi de poenitentia, et dissili catholicamente quello havevo studiato de poenitentia et tanto havevo ordinato di dire. Alla qual cosa Sua reverendissima Signoria contradisse alterandosi alquanto: «Questo non è la materia vera de poenitentia, perché bisogna introdurre il beneficio di Christo et l’articolo della giustificatione intesa al modo luterano, et così facevano li apostoli quando predicavano la penitentia»”. Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁰³ On this work, which has disappeared, see Mayer, ‘A Reluctant Author’, pp. 74.75.

¹⁰⁴ “Quanto al mio scritto, che Vostra Signoria reverendissima dimanda, del modo di predicare, admonendomi che mi guardi bene di non cascar in superbia, ingannato sotto la spetie di humiltà [...]. Io haveva comminzato pensando di finirla in pochi giorni, ma pui considerando, mi parse la materia di tale sorte grande, che veramente non mi bastava l’animo a penetrare più ultra, et così intermissi. Et tandem, per dire il tutto come sta, venendo qui un homo molto zelante de la edificatione del populo christiano, et conferendo con lui de questa materia, et trovando in alcune cose la soa opinion molto diversa da la mia, stimolato da questa occasione son tornato a esaminare la cosa meglio”. Pole, *Epistolae*, III, p. 45 (Viterbo, 23 December 1541; erroneously dated 1542 in this edition).

¹⁰⁵ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 118-119. See also Pole’s letter to Ignatius of Loyola (Viterbo, 22 December 1541; published in Pole, *Epistolae*, V, pp. 115-116), in which he expresses his regret for Bobadilla’s compulsory departure from Viterbo.

¹⁰⁶ See *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 809-810 (extract from the trial against Apollonio Merenda; questioning of 24 June 1551). On Apollonio Merenda, see Carlo De Frede, ‘Un calabrese emigrato a Ginevra: Apollonio Merenda’, published in De Frede’s collection of essays, *Religiosità e cultura nel Cinquecento italiano* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1999), pp. 95-116. See also Merenda’s biographical profile in *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 804-809.

manuscript of Pole's *De modo concionandi* (*On the Way of Preaching*) together with other works of the cardinal.¹⁰⁷

3.2. *Living Books*

Among the *spirituali*'s texts which were instead published and intended for a wider circulation, none achieved the popularity of the *Benefit of Christ*, which can be rightly seen as the religious manifesto of the *spirituali*. What is more, given the collective authorship of this short treaty, its very process of composition is in itself the epitome of the strong bond of continuity between the experience of Valdés's Neapolitan sodality and that of Pole's *Ecclesia Viterbiensis*. Before it was published anonymously by the Venetian printer Bernardino Bindoni in 1543, the manuscript of the *Beneficio* had not only been revised and rewritten several times, but had also circulated among prelates and theologians.¹⁰⁸ By virtue of this, it did not take long before rumours about the identity of the authors started to fly around. Marcello Cervini was one of the first members of the curia that managed to glean this information, over the course of his correspondence with Ludovico Beccadelli. Although reluctantly, the latter gave away the information that the book was "principally the work of a black monk" (that is to say a Benedictine).¹⁰⁹ The "black monk" to whom Beccadelli referred was Benedetto Fontanini, a monk from Mantua and a relative of Giulia Gonzaga. In the mid-1530s Fontanini had sojourned at the Benedictine abbey of San Giorgio Maggiore of Venice, where he had the opportunity to meet Pole, who associated in this period with the abbot of San Giorgio, Gregorio Cortese. In 1537, after a short stay in Naples (where he presumably met Juan de Valdés), don Benedetto moved to the Sicilian monastery of San Niccolò l'Arena, on the south slopes of Mount Etna. Here he wrote the original version of the *Beneficio di*

¹⁰⁷ "Mi ricordo che la marchesa della Peschara mi disse haveva havuto certi scritti, per quanto mi ricordo, del cardinal Polo; et particolarmente certi quinterni d'un libro ch'el componeva *De modo concionandi*". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 81 (deposition of Bernardo Bartoli; San Gimignano, 7-10 July 1555); cf. p. 82.

¹⁰⁸ See Giorgio Caravale, *Sulle tracce dell'eresia. Ambrogio Catarino Politi (1484-1553)* (Firenze: Olschki, 2007), pp. 170-171.

¹⁰⁹ Benedetto da Mantova, *Il beneficio di Cristo. Con le versioni del secolo XVI, documenti e testimonianze*, Salvatore Caponetto (ed.) (DeKalb (Illinois, USA)-Firenze-Chicago: Northern Illinois University Press-Sansoni-The Newberry Library, 1972; henceforward *Beneficio di Cristo*), p. 434 (Cervini to Beccadelli; Rome, 19 January 1544).

Cristo.¹¹⁰ Yet this version would undergo substantial revisions in Viterbo by Marcantonio Flaminio, who “expanded it or shorten it as he wished”, with Pole’s approval.¹¹¹ As secretary of cardinal Contarini, Ludovico Beccadelli had had the opportunity to read Flaminio’s manuscript versions of the *Beneficio* which were sent to Contarini to obtain his opinion. In the spring of 1542, the Venetian cardinal recommended a passage from Saint Bernard on justification, which Flaminio (as well as Pole)¹¹² greatly appreciated “to the point of deciding to add it to his small book”, as Priuli put it in a letter to Beccadelli.¹¹³

The *Beneficio di Cristo* was not the only case in which the epistolary exchanges or the conversations between these men were actually translated into popular religious books. In 1545, another work was published anonymously in Rome with the title *Modo che si dee tenere ne l’insegnare et predicare il principio della religione christiana* (*The Way One Must Follow to Teach and Preach the Principle of Christian Religion*). This book contained five short tracts which came to be known as the *Trattatelli* or *Trataditos* of Juan de Valdés. In the last decade of the XX century, it has been demonstrated that, in reality, only two of these tracts (the first and the last) are ascribable to Valdés, whereas the others are the very remaining letters by means of which, in 1540, Flaminio had tried to persuade Priuli and Pole of the doctrine of *iustitia ex sola fide*.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ See what Carnesecchi recounted in 1560: “Quanto a l’authore, me pare d’havere inteso che sia stato un frate Benedetto da Mantua, monacho di san Benedetto, stando in un monasterio in Cathania vicino al monte Etna”. *Processi Carnesecchi*, I, p. 59 (III questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 16 May 1560).

¹¹¹ “Questo libro era stato composto da un heremita, persona semplice per quanto mi ricordo, et il nome non so, et lui poi – cioè messer Marcantonio Flaminio – lo distinse et ordinò et accrebbe et diminuì secondo che li pareva”. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 82.

¹¹² See Pole’s letter to Contarini of 1st May 1542. Pole, *Epistolae*, III, p. 53.

¹¹³ “Il loco di san Bernardo, del quale Sua Signoria reverendissima [Contarini] ha advertito monsignore [Pole], è grandemente piaciuto a messer Marco Antonio [Flaminio] sugli altri, tal che ha pensato d’inserirlo nel suo libretto. Questo sol loco doveria bastar per risposta a quel padre Polito, si aures habet audiendi, le quali l’inordinato zelo et le passioni facilmente ci soleno chiuder”. Oxford, Bodleian Library, *Ital.*, C. 25, cc. 196r-198v. See this passage in *Beneficio di Cristo*, p. 37. It has been identified by Tommaso Bozza in his *Nuovi studi sulla riforma in Italia. I. Il “Beneficio di Cristo”* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1976), pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁴ See Firpo, *Tra alumbados e «spirituali»*, pp. 163-184. The *Modo che si dee tenere ne l’insegnare et predicare il principio della religione christiana* is published in Marcantonio Flaminio, *Apologia del “Beneficio di Christo” e altri scritti inediti*, Dario Marcatto (ed.) (Firenze: Olschki, 1996), pp. 143-193. The only remaining letter of Priuli (which can be read *ibid.*, pp. 195-199) is a reply to Flaminio’s one, which is published as the third of the *Trattatelli*, with the title *Della medesima giustificatione* (*On the Same Justification*, *ibid.*, pp. 166-173). Flaminio’s reply to Priuli’s letter is instead the second *trattatello*, entitled *Della giustificatione* (*On Justification*, *ibid.*, pp. 161-166). The fourth *trattatello*, *Che la vita eterna è dono di Dio per Iesu Christo nostro signore* (*On the Eternal Life as God’s Gift Through Our Lord Jesus Christ*, *ibid.*, pp. 173-177) is instead the first letter of Flaminio, written in reply to a lost letter of Priuli. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 38-48, 54-56.

After his arrival in Viterbo, it did not take long for Flaminio to assume a leading role both in the organisation of an actual programme of evangelical reading and in the frequent publication of commentaries or other similar works that took inspiration from – or even reproduced – the conversations in Pole’s Viterbese residence.¹¹⁵ As was seen in the previous chapter, even the dialogue form of Pole’s *De reformatione* might be inspired by the conversations he had with his friends. In this respect, it is not by chance that the last section of his work so closely resembles a biblical commentary. During the same period, Pole was intent on writing the commentary on a Psalm, which gave him the opportunity to deal with the matters of “justification, faith, works, law etc.”¹¹⁶ He was not the only one doing this: in his *Confessio*, Morone stated that he had commented “four or five Psalms”;¹¹⁷ this was also the case for Priuli¹¹⁸ and Flaminio himself, whose paraphrases in prose and verse were published several times in the XVI century. Beyond this activity, however, Flaminio was also committed to revising and translating into Italian some of Valdés’s book (such as the *Divine Considerations*, the *Christian Alphabet* and the commentary on the Psalms), which he had taken along with him from Naples.¹¹⁹ Many of these were printed, not by chance, in the mid-1540s, when the campaign of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* reached its peak.

¹¹⁵ See Marcantonio Flaminio, *Meditationi et orationi formate sopra l’epistola di san Paolo ai romani*, Massimo Firpo (ed.) (Torino: Nino Aragno Editore, 2007).

¹¹⁶ See above, p. 97, note 8.

¹¹⁷ “Per mio essercitio et instruttione ho esposto quattro o cinque Psalmi alcuni anni fa, cioè il Psalmo *Benedicam Dominum in omni tempore* [Ps. XXXIII]; et *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo* [Ps. LXXXVIII]; *Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit* [Ps. XXII]; *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* [Ps. CXVI]; et *In convertendo Dominus captivitatem Iacob* [Ps. CXXV: *In convertendo Dominum captivitatem Sion*. Cf. Ps. LXXXIV, 2: *Avertisti captivitatem Iacob*].” *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 421.

¹¹⁸ During the Inquisition trial against Bartolomé Carranza, the royal chaplain Francisco Delgado (who had served Pole in England) declared that Priuli had taken along with him “un librito [...] que era interpretación de los Psalmos, escriptos de su mano e cabeça”. Delgado also declared that he had once had a look at that small book, which had been left by Priuli. The latter “pensó que se los avía tomado para veer o mostrar a alguno que supiese más [...] e se los pidió mostrando gran pena que [...] este testigo los oviese tomado [...], porque le parecería tenía sospecha de él”. *Fray Bartolomé Carranza*, II/2, pp. 945-946.

¹¹⁹ “So bene che il Flaminio haveva seco una parte delli scritti di Valdés, et credo che fussero il libro delle *Considerationi* et il commento sopra li Psalmi, et che andava traducendoli di spagnuolo in italiano per compiacere alla sudetta signora [Giulia Gonzaga], che n’haveva recerco” (XCVI questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 19 February 1567). *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/3, p. 1031.

3.3. *An Audacious Pastoral Activity: Vittore Soranzo in Bergamo*

It is no surprise to find the same titles in the list of books that belonged to Vittore Soranzo, the bishop of Bergamo who had associated with most of the members of both the Neapolitan sodality and the *Ecclesia viterbiensis*. Soranzo was indeed one of the disciples of Valdés that, together with his friends Flaminio and Carnesecchi (not to mention many other figures) had contributed to maintaining a bond of continuity between the experience of Valdés's group and that of Pole's *spirituali*. In 1550 – by which time Soranzo had already gained an understanding of the Inquisition investigation about him – the information provided by one of his collaborators allowed the inquisitors to discover two wooden cases that contained prohibited books and that had been hidden in the vineyard of an illiterate peasant.¹²⁰ Soranzo had to admit that those were his books. He had confided their existence to Gian Pietro Faceti, a priest also known as Parisotto, “because he had been my confessor and knew that my opinions were contrary to the faith”.¹²¹ One year earlier, Parisotto had hidden another case of books (some of which probably belonged to Soranzo) in the cell of Anotonia Dughetti, who was then the abbess of the monastery of San Fermo.¹²²

Prohibited books, as well as a priest and confessor that was complicit with the bishop, do not appear by coincidence in this story, for they constituted the key instruments of Soranzo's pastoral activity in the diocese of Bergamo. As has been shown before, preaching and printing represented also the two main channels for the proselytism of both the Valdesian circle in Naples and the *Ecclesia* of Viterbo. It was in Naples and Viterbo, after all, that Soranzo had the opportunity to know the doctrines and read the books which he would later try to spread in his diocese. His decision to make these doctrines a pillar of his pastoral care inclined him, for instance, to entrust important roles to priests whom he knew to be sympathetic towards his doctrinal convictions. The main church of Bergamo, Sant'Alessandro in Colonna, was thus

¹²⁰ The collaborator of Soranzo who gave this information was the priest Pasino of Carpenedolo, the very person to whom Soranzo had asked to hide the books. See *Processi Soranzo*, I, pp. XXXIX-XL, 320-322, note 10. See also pp. 399-410 for the list of Soranzo's prohibited books, and *ibid.*, II, pp. 435-587 for the critical edition of the collection of writings that were in one of the manuscripts volumes in the wooden cases.

¹²¹ “Mi sono confidato di pre Parisoto in fargli scrivere et scop[r]irli il mio tener i libri prohibiti, sì perché scriveva bene sì perché mi era stato confessore et il conosceva in queste oppinioni contrarie alla fede”. *Ibid.*, I, p. 410.

¹²² Previously, the case had been kept in the house of Parisotto's mother. Parisotto would subsequently asked Bartolomeo Lombardini to take it to the monastery. See *ibid.*, II, pp. 720-727.

committed to Giovan Francesco of Asola and Omobono Asperti of Cremona, both of whom would be later accused of heresy.¹²³ During his trial, don Omobono did not scruple to state that the Roman Church was the Church of the Antichrist, thus being “completely opposed to the Gospel of Christ”.¹²⁴ Consequently, he would rather be burnt than abjure.¹²⁵ Until the time Soranzo had to leave his diocese, he tended to be indulgent and protect these priests, even when he got to know that one of them, the above-mentioned Parisotto, was in a relationship with Dorotea Sonzogno, a nun in the monastery of San Fermo, to which Parisotto had been assigned as a confessor. The abbess of the monastery would admit, some time later, that she had been maid of honour at the secret wedding of Dorotea and Parisotto.¹²⁶ When Soranzo was informed about this wedding, he only assigned Parisotto to a different parish, where the priest continued, according to another witnesses, to “try and spread heretical opinions”.¹²⁷ Soranzo would go as far as to provide the married couple with hospitality before they eventually fled beyond the Alps.¹²⁸

On 16 July 1557, the new vicar episcopal in Bergamo, Giovan Battista Brugnattelli,¹²⁹ was told by the nuns of San Fermo that, many years earlier, Parisotto had given them three books on behalf of Soranzo. One of them “was entitled *Alphabeto christiano*, which we used to read in the mensa more than eight years ago”.¹³⁰ Moreover, the written reports of Soranzo’s pastoral visits show that he systematically recommended parish priests to get not only the vernacular translation of the Bible, or at least the new Testament, but also copies of other works written in Germany, such as the *Medicine of the Soul* of the Protestant theologian

¹²³ See Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo*, pp. 247-248.

¹²⁴ “La Chiesa romana pugnat ex diametro cum evangelio Christi [...]. Vi ho detto a sufficientia dicendovi la Chiesa romana non essere la vera Chiesa ma la Chiesa di Antichristo”. *Processi Soranzo*, II, p. 591 (documents of the trial against don Omobono Asperti). On Omobono Asperti, see the biographical note *ibid.*, I, p. 7, note 1.

¹²⁵ See *ibid.*, II, p. 596.

¹²⁶ See the trials against Dorotea Sonzogno, Antonia Dughetti and Parisotto Faceti, *ibid.*, pp. 678-759.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 175-176 (questioning of friar Domenico Adelasio; Rome, 13-15 April 1551). On Domenico Adelasio, see the biographical note, *ibid.*, pp. 162-165, note 1.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 184 (questioning of Giacomo Livrerio; Verona, 22 April 1551). On don Giacomo Livrerio, see the biographical note, *ibid.*, p. 178, note 1.

¹²⁹ See his biographical note, *ibid.*, II, p. 950, note 1. See also the memoranda which he sent to the Holy Office in Rome, pp. 950-1000, especially the third one, p. 980 and ff.

¹³⁰ “Il vescovo fo quello che ne mandò tre [libri]: uno intitolato *Alphabeto christiano*, quale si lesse un gran tempo a la mensa sono più di ott’anni; et depoi mandò questo libro del Trattato di santo Athanasio [...] et lo mandò acciò che ’l se legesse alla mensa. Ma non fu letto, perhoché mandato che l’hebbe stette poco esser citato a Roma”. *Ibid.*, p. 1010 (questioning of Elisabetta Ceresoli; Bergamo, 16 July 1557). The information is confirmed by Caterina Taglioni: see *ibid.*, pp. 1011-1012.

Urbanus Rhegius and the *Concilium coloniense* of Iohannes Gropper.¹³¹ In his intentions, these would prove useful for the daily acts of worship and the administration of the sacraments.

Soranzo's experience in Bergamo is particularly significant in two ways. Firstly, it gives further evidence that what the *spirituali* tried to do in Viterbo, mainly through preaching and printing, did not merely amount to a sort of preparatory propaganda campaign. In other words, their activities were not simply propaedeutic to the actual programme for reform, as though this were to be implemented in a subsequent phase. In his pastoral administration, Soranzo imitated, to a large extent, other similar experiences of episcopal reform, which were based on the restoration of ecclesiastical discipline, the correct administration of sacraments and the elimination of superstitious practices. Nonetheless, the real kernel of Soranzo's pastoral care was a peculiar doctrinal message, which he tried to spread through an accurate selection of priests and preachers, as well as through a wide circulation of the books he had read in Naples and Viterbo. This was therefore an essential part of his plan for reform, as it was for Pole, who resorted to the same means to implement a *de facto* programme for reform. This programme was different from the ones he had come across until then, and this is also the reason for the absence of a programme of such kind from his *De reformatione*. Thus preaching, printing and pastoral care were not – or not exclusively – the main instruments of proselytism, but they became the very methods of a reform whose foundation consisted in a unique message, shaped through the complex interaction between very different groups: the *alumbrados*, the students at Alcalá, the Italian humanist circles and, eventually, Valdés and Pole's sodalities.

Secondly, the difficulties in proceeding with this “radical third way” – which audaciously combined doctrinal innovation with the restoration of unity – emerged very soon, as Soranzo's case showed. He ended up being trapped, on the one hand, by the rigour of the Inquisition and, on the other hand, by the opposite choices of his collaborators, most of whom opted for Calvinism. The boundaries were becoming less fluid, and the room for manoeuvre

¹³¹ Bergamo, Archivio della curia vescovile, *Visite pastorali*, XI-XIV. For the *Medicina dell'anima*, see *ibid.*, XII, ff. 22r and ff.; XIV, ff. 5r and ff. and *passim*. The *Concilium coloniense* was published in Cologne in 1538. It collected the canons of the provincial council summoned by archbishop Hermann von Wied. By virtue of its irenic theology and its aspirations to reform, the book constituted a basis for the Regensburg Colloquy. It was appreciated by Flaminio, Bembo, Contarini and Pole, who recommend Giberti and Morone to employ it in their dioceses. See Firpo, *Vittore Soranzo*, pp. 291-295.

was decreasing: Rome or Geneva was becoming the only possible choice. In the wider arena of the Council, as well as over the course of the struggle for the papacy, Pole was thus going to experience the same problems which Soranzo had to face in his diocese of Bergamo.

CHAPTER V

The *Cardinalis Ang(e)licus*:

Prophecy and Astrology at the Service of Church Reform

1.1. *An Invisible Programme That Was Widely Known*

Apart from the difficulties of a changing situation, in which the progressive tightening of the doctrinal and institutional boundaries was rapidly narrowing the room for manoeuvre, the main source of trouble for Pole's "radical third way" lay in his intrinsically paradoxical aspiration to attain what can be termed "Church reform without the Church". In this formulation, the dual meaning purposely attached to the word "without" – which denotes here the condition both of absence, or at least non-visibility, and, in a more archaic sense, of being outside – corresponds to the double level (theological and institutional) at which Pole's idea of reform deviated from many other conceptions and experiments of ecclesiastical renewal. First of all, the analysis of the ecclesiology that underpins *De reformatione Ecclesiae* has shown that the notion of the Church as a visible hierarchical structure is virtually excluded from the idea of reform outlined in this treatise. Pole's ecclesiology, on the contrary, ends up depriving the sacerdotal office of meaning, thus turning the ecclesiastical institution itself into an evanescent shell, which proves to be all-embracing by virtue of its very emptiness. This ecclesiology did not remain a mere theoretical construct, but played a significant role in leading Pole to opt for non-institutional means in order to try and implement a reform that was undertaken *de facto*, rather than being previously designed and described in written form. Consequently, official religious colloquies, imperial diets and the council did not constitute, from the perspective of Pole and his sodality in Viterbo, the main places where to further religious reform, which was pursued instead by having recourse to the same channels through which it was promoted, namely by means of printing, preaching and pastoral activity. Hence the second meaning of the definition "Church reform without (outside) the Church". What is more, not only did this attempt at reform fall outside the Church in institutional terms, but even the eclectic unsystematic theology that underpinned it became increasingly suspect in

the eyes of the growing number of prelates who saw themselves as rigorous custodians of a renewed orthodoxy.

The doctrinal opinions shared by the members of the *Ecclesia viterbiensis* took shape, as was explained in the previous chapter, through the multifaceted interactions between several groups, whose cultural legacies had been reaped and developed at first in Valdés's Neapolitan sodality and, subsequently, in the circle of Viterbo. Despite their different conceptions of and approaches to the realisation of a religious reform, all these groups were particularly susceptible to the widespread prophetic speculations and apocalyptic expectations that characterised the late Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. In these centuries, eschatological concerns were often intertwined with the diffuse aspirations to restore an ideal original and harmonious state of the Church. The combination of these two strands contributed to shaping opposite conceptions of the papacy, which were epitomised in the antithetical images of the pope as Antichrist or as *pastor angelicus*. Pole himself, not least owing to his troublesome personal vicissitudes, had always been receptive to prophetic speculations, which he had often employed (as was the case in his *De unitate Ecclesiae*) as an hermeneutic key to the uncertainties and the conflicts of his time. It is in this outlook that he tended to mingle his stance on reform with a particular conception of the papal office that revolved around the prophetic figure of the Angelic Pope. The way in which these ideas were entwined accentuated the distinctive features of the ideal of reform as conceived by Pole. I have previously shown the consistent tendency, in the manuscripts of *De reformatione*, towards the omission of any hint about the concrete measures of an ecclesiastical reformation. This absence finds an evident parallel in the implicit dissolution of the hierarchical structure of the Church, which appears to give way to a sort of *Ecclesia spiritualis* (spiritual Church). As a consequence, Pole deliberately avoids engaging in a treatment of the possible practical remedies for the crisis of the ecclesiastical institution. He shifts the focus, on the contrary, towards the inner dimension of every individual believer, whom Pole urges to listen to the voice of "the holy master that speaks from within"¹ and teaches *ab aeterno* the fundamental moral precepts.

¹ BNN, MS. IX.A.14, ff. 28v-29r.

Pole's ideal of an *Ecclesia spiritualis*, which underpins his notion of reform, is complementary to the myth of the *pastor angelicus*, under whose spell Pole fell together with the innumerable people who, at least for three centuries, had projected their prophetic dream of a renewed and purified Church onto this fascinating simulacrum.² The legend of the Angelic Pope dates back to the XIII century and is somehow related to Joachim of Fiore's theory of the three ages of history. This apocalyptic figure had often been interpreted as a possible agent for the ultimate religious reform of the Christendom before the coming of the Antichrist. Thus the image of the *pastor angelicus* had provided inspiration for late medieval books of prophecies, such as the pseudo-Joachimist *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* and the *Book of Fiore*, which circulated soon after 1300.³

Pole's tacit consent to the frequent association between him and the figure of the Angelic Pope is a further reason for his silence on the concrete steps towards the renewal of the Church. He did not actually need to be explicit about this issue, for the implicit link between himself and the powerful image of the *pastor angelicus* carried with it a whole series of expectations of very specific reforming actions, which were well-known to all sorts of people. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that Pole's alleged intentions were clearly articulated in the Roman pasquinades that circulated during the conclave of 1549-1550: "Pole is for the proclamation of quarantines, / for the correction of the psalters' editions, / and for the expansion of Sixtus's library".⁴ In another poem, Pasquino warned that "the Englishman / would take in Rome too painful measures".⁵ In a letter written to the governor of Milan Ferrante Gonzaga on 26 November 1549, three days before the beginning of the conclave, the scholar Girolamo Muzio pronounced himself amazed to learn that Pole was by far the favourite candidate for the papacy, notwithstanding the fear he aroused both among the cardinals and "throughout Rome". The source of worry, according to Muzio, was the likelihood that, "were he to become pope, it would not be possible for anybody to have more

² See Marjorie Reeves, *The Medieval Heritage*, in Marjorie Reeves (ed.), *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 3-21 (8).

³ See *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, 3 vols., Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (eds.) (New York: Continuum, 1999), II, p. 81; Bernard McGinn, John J. Collins, and Stephen J. Stein (eds.), *The Continuum History of Apocalypticism* (New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 289.

⁴ "Polo è per annunziar le quarantane, / per corregger le stampe dei salteri, / e per fornir la libreria di Sisto". *Pasquinate romane del Cinquecento*, Valerio Marucci, Antonio Marzo, and Angelo Romano (eds.), presentazione di Giovanni Aquilecchia, 2 vols. (Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1983), II, p. 883.

⁵ "L'Inglese / farebbe a Roma troppo triste spese". Ibid., p. 840.

than one benefice, and he would like every bishop and every priest to go to his own church; he would remove *annatae*,⁶ regresses,⁷ renunciations; and in sum, he would depopulate Rome and cripple the offices”.⁸

1.2. A Reform in Miniature

The defeat in the papal conclave did not prevent Pole and his closest friends from continuing cherishing the secret hope that the *cardinalis anglicus* would eventually lead the Roman Church in the guise of the *pastor angelicus*. There is evidence, in fact, that the dramatic outcome of the 1549 conclave actually marked an intensification of these hopes. Rather than remaining a private dream, the overlap between *cardinalis anglicus* and *angelicus pastor* was to be made public – at least in Pole and his friends’ intentions – and launched on a larger scale, possibly with a view to the following conclave. The vehicle for this purpose was a projected publication that explicitly combined Pole’s idea of reform, as expressed in his *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, with the decisive role traditionally ascribed to the prophetic figure of the Angelic Pope. In this book, the identity between Pole and the Angelic Pope was suggested not only by a text in which the English cardinal figured, within a sort of papal prophecy, as the embodiment of all virtues, but also by a striking image that presumably prefigured Pole’s prospective papal coat of arms.

This is what emerges from the revelations of Father Lorenzo Davidico over the course of the Inquisition trial which he had to face in Rome between 1555 and 1557. This bizarre character (whose original name was Castellino di Davide) came from near Vercelli, but had

⁶ The *annatae* or *primitiae* (first fruits) were the yearly profits which a benefice-holder owed to the papal treasury during his first year.

⁷ The right to hand a debt over other co-debtors.

⁸ “Et Polo è arrivato in fino a dicinove et mezzo [per cento]: et è maraviglia il fatto suo, che in questo Collegio de’ cardinali non ce ne è alcuno di chi i cardinali et tutta Roma habbia maggior paura, et pur sta in reputatione del papato. Et la paura che se ne ha è che, se egli fosse papa, non comporterebbe che alcuno havesse più di una chiesa curata, et vorrebbe che ogni vescovo et ogni curato andasse alla sua chiesa; che leverebbe annate, regressi, renuncie, et che in somma dispopolerebbe Roma et ruinerebbe gli officii. Questa tema si ha di lui, et nondimeno non ce ne è niuno che nella universale opinione camini più al papato”. *Lettere di Girolamo Muzio giustinopolitano conservate nell’Archivio governativo di Parma* (Parma: F. Carmignani, 1864), p. 109. The letter, written from Rome, is published *ibid.*, pp. 108-109. On Girolamo Muzio, see Marco Faini’s entry in *DBI*, LXXVII.

spent more than ten years in Milan, among the clerics regular of St. Paul.⁹ In 1547, after being expelled from the Barnabites on the grounds of his repeated breaches of the rules and his immoderate ambition, he had moved to Rome. Here he managed to gain favour with pope Paul III and started to move around in several cities, where he was appreciated as preacher and theologian. In this period he associated with some members of the Society of Jesus, whose founder he met in Rome during the summer of 1550. On this occasion, Davidico must have convinced Ignatius of Loyola to intercede with the superior general of the Barnabites, Giovanni Pietro Besozzi, in order to obtain his readmission in the congregation. Notwithstanding his disappointment at the rejection of the request,¹⁰ Davidico slowly made his name as persecutor of heretics, thus managing to obtain from pope Julius III, on 12 September 1550, the nomination as apostolic preacher and commissioner for the heretical wickedness. Alongside this activity, Davidico plunged into the writing of an impressive series of devotional books and pamphlets, which cover – only between 1550 and 1552 – almost 4,000 pages. One of this works, the *Jewel of the True Christian*,¹¹ was dedicated to cardinal Pole, whom Davidico had the opportunity to meet precisely in these years. During the Inquisition trial in Rome, Davidico stated that he frequently happened to have dinner at Pole's place, where the English cardinal seemed to take delight in conversing with him, often in the presence of Alvise Priuli, the cardinal's constant companion.¹²

In the words of Davidico, Priuli “had resorted to revelations and constellations” in order to foresee Pole's chances of attaining the papacy. Indeed, Priuli knew

a gentleman who has found through revelation, over the last hundred years, that there must be an Angelic Pope; and he maintains that, according to the qualities of the cardinal of England, it

⁹ For the following biographical notes about Lorenzo Davidico, see Massimo Firpo, *Nel labirinto del mondo. Lorenzo Davidico tra santi, eretici, inquisitori* (Firenze: Olschki, 1992); the entry of Carlo von Flüe in *DBI*, XXXIII, pp. 157-160; *Processi Davidico*, pp. IX-CLXI, *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 38-40.

¹⁰ According to the congregation, Davidico had never been officially admitted since he had not taken the vows, therefore he could not be formally readmitted.

¹¹ *Gioiello del vero christiano* (Roma: Antonio Blado, 1552).

¹² “Esso monsignor illustrissimo me haveva detto che me lassassi vedere qualche volta et cossi, occorrendome disinar spesso seco, occorreva anchi che non essendoli altri f[ro]rostieri ce retiravamo in camera et spesso non erimo altri che noi tre, cioè el cardinale, el Priuoli et io. Et nelli discorsi che si faceva – [de] li quali molto si delectava el cardinale et molte volte monsignor Priuoli – io considerava con diligentia le loro parole, gesti etc.”. *Processi Davidico*, p. 205 (X questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 19 June 1556). As regards Priuli, Davidico stated that he had spoken “several times” with him as well (“io lo cognosco già qualche anni sonno, solamente che sta con monsignor de Inghilterra, et ho parlato più volte con lui”). *Ibid.*, p. 204.

will take place with him [Pole]. Thus this gentleman sees, almost every night at a given time, certain stars that entail the same, consistently with these revelations. And he says that, as soon as we will reach a certain point, the pope who is currently alive will die – and this was at the time of pope Julius III – and miraculously the cardinals will at once elect an Angelic Pope, who is – he believes – the cardinal of England.¹³

The prophecies and “revelations” of this “gentleman” did not simply remain vague rumours that circulated in Pole’s restricted circle of friends, but were set down in black and white by the same gentleman. He was said to own a book “in which he has composed 12 verses about every pope over the last hundred years. In these verses he shows the vices of those pontiffs and the virtues of [the cardinal of] England, and so he attributes all the vices to the others and the virtues to him [Pole]”.¹⁴ The most intriguing feature of this book, though, was its frontispiece: this portrayed

an open consistory in miniature, in which the cardinal of England figures in papal clothes, with a dove on [or better: over] his shoulder. Between the dove and a [the] holy Father is a golden ray. On one side it is written “unction of the spirit” [*unctio spiritus*] and “shall teach you all things” [*docebit te omnia*”; *Io.* 14, 26; cf. *I Io.* 2, 27], and on the other side “blessed is the one you discipline, Lord” [*beatus vir quem tu erudieris, Domine*”; *Ps.* 93, 12]. In the upper part there are three angels on a cloud with this inscription: “Here truly is the Israelite in whom there is no deceit [*Io.* 1, 47], the Angelic Pope sent and chosen by God” [*Hic est verus Israelita in quo dolus non est, angelicus papa a Deo missus et electus*”]; and there are some other things.¹⁵

¹³ “Il Prioli sudetto si è prevalso de revelationi et constellationi per sapere il successo del papato circa il cardinale suo. Et così li è un gentilhomio quale ha trovato per revelatione da cento anni in qua che debbe essere un papa angelico et, secundo le qualità del cardinale d’Ingliterra, vole che habbia loco in lui. Così questo gentilhomio vede quasi ad ogni nocte ad una certa hora certe stelle che accennano l’istesso, como conforme a tale revelationi, et dice che subito gionti ad un certo segno morirà il papa che se trova vivo – et questo fu nel tempo de papa Iulio terzo – et subito li cardinali per miracolo farranno un papa angelico, quale tene che sia Ingliterra”. Ibid., p. 215 (XII questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 13 July 1556).

¹⁴ “Per questo dicto gentilhomio ha seco un libro quale ha visto costui che deponerà, nel qual libro lui fa 12 versi a ciaschuno papa da 100 anni in qua, in li quali dice li vicii de quelli pontifici et le virtù de Ingliterra, et così conclude tutti li vicii in li altri et le virtù in lui”. Ibid.

¹⁵ “Innanzi al libro è un concistorio aperto in miniatura, nel quale è il cardinale Ingliterra retracto in abito de papa, con una colomba sopra la spalla fra la quale et un santo Padre è un raso d’oro. Da una parte è scripto «unctio spiritus» et «docebit te omnia» [*Io.* 14, 26; cf. *I Io.* 2, 27], et dall’altra parte «beatus vir quem tu erudieris Domine» [*Ps.* 93, 12]. Di sopra sonno tre angeli in nube con tal breve: «Hic est verus Israelita in quo dolus non est [*Io.* 1, 47], angelicus papa a Deo missus et electus»; et ce ha de altre cose”. Ibid.

The frontispiece described by Davidico, together with the biblical quotations in the miniature, does seem the figurative summary of Pole's *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, for all the most peculiar doctrinal views expressed in the treatise are effectively condensed in a single image. Indeed, as is made clear by the biblical inscriptions on both sides of the frontispiece, the golden ray between the dove and the pontiff undoubtedly recalls the guidance provided by the illumination of the divine spirit, which Pole had repeatedly emphasised in the longest section of *De reformatione*. Thus his discourse on the constant presence – within man's inner being as well as in human history – of the spirit of God and of Christ, acting in every individual as an internal teacher, is perfectly encapsulated in the visual juxtaposition of the inscriptions that framed the image of the dove with the golden ray: on one side “unction of the spirit” and “shall teach you all things”, on the other side “blessed is the one you discipline, Lord”. Pole's views on this matter must have been certainly shared by Alvise Priuli, who had highly praised the gentleman's book by saying that “he felt the same in his soul”.¹⁶ In fact, Davidico reported to the inquisitors that he had happened to hear a conversation between “a stranger” and Priuli himself, who had extolled and “exaggerated, with many words”, “the nothingness of oneself and the [act of] putting oneself in God, because He is the one who performs the operations in us”.¹⁷

In the frontispiece described by Davidico, the prominence of the illumination and the guidance of the divine spirit tacitly implies, as in Pole's treatise on Church reform, a considerable underestimation of the hierarchical structure of the Church, which was represented by the “open consistory in miniature”. Once again, this image proves to be an efficacious visual compendium of the contents of *De reformatione*, in which Pole had stigmatised the frequent attempts at religious reform that neglect the “knowledge of the Word”¹⁸ and the warnings of “the holy master that speaks from within”. All the reforming efforts made by the princes or by the ecumenical council would be fruitless – Pole had maintained – without the people's (*populus*) prior compliance with the moral teachings of the

¹⁶ “Visto che l'hebbe il Prioli, molto lo commendò dicendo ch'el medesimo sentiva nel suo spirito”. Ibid.

¹⁷ “Et essendo subito chiamato, me disse che expectassi et, parlando con un forastiero fora, sentitte che multo li laudava la nilità di sé stesso et mettersi in Dio, perché lui è quel che fa le operationi in nui, et questa cosa la exagerò con molte parole”. Ibid., p. 216.

¹⁸ BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 20r.

divine spirit. These precepts would suffice to help everyone conduct himself with honesty and holiness, even if deprived of all pastors.¹⁹ The simple moral principles that, owing to the constant presence of the holy spirit, are “almost implanted in our souls”,²⁰ constitute, in Pole’s opinion, not only “the principle, but even the means and the end of the reform itself”.²¹ In this respect, by virtue of the parallelism between the assertions of *De reformatione* and the message conveyed by the miniature of the Angelic Pope, the latter can be also regarded as the emblematic representation of Pole’s idea of how the ecclesiastical reform ought to be implemented.

This interpretation is further reinforced by another piece of information disclosed by Lorenzo Davidico in the course of the questioning during which he reported the conversation between Priuli and the unspecified stranger. On this occasion, Davidico had spotted Priuli opening a box to give a letter to the stranger. Inside the box – Davidico said – was “a book whose title read *The Life of the Angelic Pope and Treatise on the Reform of the Church* [*Vita angelici papae et tractatus de reformatione Ecclesiae*], and I saw the aforesaid open consistory with that coat of arms”.²² Given the close correspondence between the frontispiece of the book on the Angelic Pope, as described by Davidico, and the contents of Pole’s *De reformatione*, it is highly likely that the *Treatise on the Reform of the Church* in the box was precisely the cardinal’s work. It is not certain whether the copy in the box was based on one of the known manuscript versions of *De reformatione*. In this case, the possible source might be one of the fair copies that were meant for the press, as a part of the campaign launched by the *spirituali* of Viterbo. What is certain, however, is that the direct correlation between Pole’s conception of reform and the prophetic role which he – as Angelic Pope – would play in this process, was to become self-evident by means of the publication in the same book of the *Life of the Angelic Pope* and Pole’s *De reformatione*.

This unequivocal link was to strengthen the messages conveyed both by the two treaties and by the miniature. In fact, the superiority of the angelic pontiff – “sent and chosen by God” and illuminated by the holy spirit – over the visible structure of the Church, symbolised by the

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, f. 19v.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, f. 24r.

²¹ “Non tantum [...] principium, sed etiam medium et pene finis ipsius reformationis”. *Ibid.*, f. 21v.

²² “Et poi ragionando con lui et aprendo la cassa per dare una lettera a colui, viddi che [Priuli] haveva un libro intitolato *Vita angelici papae et tractatus de reformatione Ecclesiae*, et viddi dicto concistorio aperto con quella arme”. *Processi Davidico*, p. 216.

consistory, reinforced Pole's point that a true religious reform could not proceed from institutional actions, no matter how sincere they were. This was not to say that these measures, as well as the bodies that were traditionally deputed to develop and implement them (such as the council), were to be excluded from the process. They certainly played a role in it (hence the presence of the consistory in the miniature), but the conviction that Church reform originated with them was the same as mistaking the branches of a tree for its roots. In Pole's view, no actual reform could ever take place in the visible Church, unless as a consequence of a prior process that unfolded, by divine providence, in every individual who recognises the illumination of the spirit and accepts its guidance.

It is not by chance that the Angelic Pope of the miniature was "sent and chosen by God" and not by men, that is to say the cardinals, whom were still depicted in the same image. Alvise Priuli had explained this peculiarity to Davidico, on the occasion of a meeting in Pole's house between 1552 and 1553. Only after asking Davidico to swear on the altar to keep everything a secret had Priuli provided a revealing insight into the illustration of the book, which he had elucidated by asking a riddle:

"There are two of them. One is chosen as pope by God and by men, and he refuses. The other is elected only by men and accepts the papacy. Whom do you think is the legitimate pope?"

Davidico had been cautious about answering directly and had tried instead to get Priuli to disclose the hidden meaning of the riddle. He had suggested, therefore, that Priuli hinted "at the person of your cardinal [Pole] and pope Julius III", but his interlocutor had abruptly invited him to "just answer resolutely to the question" without "wondering too much". Davidico had eventually formulated a prudent and ambiguous reply by declaring that he considered legitimate as pope "the one on whom the universal choice of the electors dwells, although he might not be so holy and perfect".²³ Given the circumstances in which Davidico

²³ "Io me trovai una volta in casa del reverendissimo Inghilterra a passeggiare in la cappella dove se dicea la messa penso fosse lo anno del '52 o '53 – et ragionando con Aloysi Prioli me disse, da me a lui soli: «Ve vorria dire una cosa, ma vorrei iurassi non parlarne». Io li dissi (confidando in la sua discretione) che non me dirria cosa in preiudicio della mia coscienza [et] che senza iuramento lo harrei tenuto secreto. Finalmente descendemmo alla sua stanza, dove iurai sopra lo altare non rivelare quello che lui me dirria, et me propose questo: «Sonno dui; uno è electo da Dio et dalli homini papa et recusa, l'altro è electo solo dalli homini et accepta el papato: chi ve pare che sia di questi dui papa legitimo?». Io li resposi: «Vostra Signoria parme che azenni la persona del vostro cardinale et di papa Iulio III». Lui soggionse: «Non cercate mo' tanto, ma

reported these alleged conversations, one can legitimately suspect that, before the inquisitors, he exaggerated the circumspect tone of his answers to Priuli. According to Davidico, his vague replies to the riddle had disappointed Priuli, who had dropped the conversation.²⁴ Pole's friend had an ally, though, in the author of the book on the Angelic Pope. Between 1551 and 1552, when Julius III was seriously ill, Davidico had happened to listen to a dialogue between the two of them, who had agreed that – in Priuli's words – “where God is concerned, our cardinal [Pole] is pope by first election, and the only thing still missing is these external ceremonies”. The “gentleman”, in turn, had proclaimed that, until the moment when Pole would become pope, he would regard the Church “as a widow, and without visible husband”. Since the gentleman shared the conviction that Pole was the true pope, Priuli considered himself authorised to “lord it over him on behalf of the cardinal [...], under pain of excommunication; and he got him to swear that he would not talk to anybody either of this coat of arms or of this book”.²⁵

2.1. *Joachimist Echoes: the Two Churches and the Papacy*

Whereas the contents of Pole's *De reformatione* – in the light of their juxtaposition with the prophecy of the Angelic Pope and the corresponding illustration – give important clues as to Pole's susceptibility to the Joachimist prophetic tradition, the interpretation of the miniature provided by Priuli leaves little doubt about the significant influence of the corollaries of the abbot's historico-theological theories on Pole's ecclesiology and approach to reform. Indeed,

respondete al caso resolutamente». Io li dissi, perseverando con lo animo in la mia coniectura delli sudetti personaggi: «Io tengo papa quello sopra il quale dura la universale voce delli elegenti, se ben non havessi tanta santità et perfectione». Ibid., pp. 263-264 (XVI questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 5 October 1556).

²⁴ “Lui disse: «Non havete quel spirito che pensava». Et così post aliqua fu buttata la cosa a monte, restandomi nello animo che lui volessi substantare et tenessi el cardinal Inghilterra papa, et questo perché già lo havea inteso, sì como ho decto sopra nel mio processo”. Ibid., p. 264.

²⁵ “Lo anno del '52 o '51, essendo infermo papa Iulio gravemente, disse il Prioli ad esso gentilhommo che li facesse diverse arme del papa angelico, et li disse: «Non credete vui ch'el nostro cardinale quanto a Dio sia papa per la prima electione, et che non manca se non queste cerimonie exteriori?». Quel gentilhommo rispose accosi: «Credo et tengo che sin che non sia publicato lui per papa angelico, credo che la sposa sia vidua et senza visibile sposo». Depoi li disse che li commandava da parte di esso cardinale, poichè lo teneva per papa, sotto poena de excommunicationi; et lo fece iurare che non parlasse ad alcuno di esse arme né di esso libro el quale, visto che l'hebbe il Prioli, molto lo commendò dicendo ch'el medesimo sentiva nel suo spirito [...]. Io intesi una volta dire al P[r]ioli che non tutti hanno li punti de verità et, se havessi potuto confidarse in me, che me harria dicte alcune cose che me haveriano aperta la mente”. Ibid., p. 216.

the riddle about the two popes implied the existence of two churches: one consisted in the visible hierarchy of the prelates who traditionally elect the Roman pontiff; the other was made up of all the people who let themselves be instructed and guided by the illumination of the divine spirit. On the basis of their features, these two churches can be equated to the orders which Joachim of Fiore had designated as the distinguishing marks of the second and third age of history (the age of the Son and that of the Spirit). In his *Liber concordiae novi ac veteris Testamenti* [*Book of the Concord of the New and Old Testament*], the Calabrian abbot had stated that the three persons of the Trinity that characterised each of the three states of mankind had their equivalent in three orders of people. The “coniugatorum ordo” (order of the married) bore the image of the Father, whereas the “clericorum ordo” (order of the clerics) epitomised the Son. The image of the Holy Spirit (“which is the love of God”) lay instead in the “monachorum ordo” (order of the monks), which did not include merely the members of monastic orders but, more generally, also those “who are called spiritual, for they live not after the flesh but after the spirit [...] and are destined for the freedom of contemplation”²⁶. Notwithstanding the absence of a detailed characterisation of the *ordo monachorum*, its profile can be deduced from the different terms and metaphors which Joachim applied to it in its different works. Being “spiritual and wise, peaceable, lovable, contemplative”,²⁷ the “people of the third *status*” can be symbolised by “the clarity of the sun” and by “that most sweet and splendid dove”,²⁸ which can not but remind the dove with the golden ray of the above-mentioned miniature. In many cases Joachim also referred to the third order as *Ecclesia contemplantium*, *Ecclesia quiescentium*, *Ecclesia spiritualis* or *populus spiritualis*, which categories he contrasted with the active life of the *Ecclesia laborantium*.²⁹

²⁶ “Habet ergo coniugatorum ordo imaginem Patris: quia sicut Pater ideo Pater est quia habet Filium, ita ordo coniugatorum non nisi ad procreandos filios i[n]stitutus est a Deo [...]. Habet et clericorum ordo imaginem Filii quia Verbum Patris, quia ad hoc constitutus est ipse, ut loquatur et doceat populum viam Domini, et ostendat ei continue legitima Dei sui. Habet et monachorum ordo imaginem Spiritus Sancti, qui est amor Dei, quia non posset ordo ipse despiciere mundum et ea quae sunt mundi nisi provocatus amore Dei et tractus ab eodem spiritu qui expulit Dominum in desertum: unde spiritualis dictus est, quia non secundum carnem ambulat sed secundum spiritum [...]. Electus est ad libertatem contemplationis, Scriptura attestante, qui ait: «Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas» [1 Cor. 3, 17]”. *Divini vatis abbatis Ioachim liber concordiae novi ac veteris Testamenti, nunc primo impressus et in luce editus* (Venice: Simone da Lovere, 1519; henceforward *Liber concordiae*), pp. 9v, 20r.

²⁷ “Populus tertii status qui erit spiritualis et sapiens, pacificus, amabilis, contemplativus, et dominator totius terrae designatus est”. Ibid., pp. 96r.

²⁸ “Illa suavissima et speciosissima columba”. *Expositio magni prophetae abbatis Ioachim in Apocalypsim [...]. Eiusdem Psalterium decem cordarum* (Venice: Francesco Bindoni and Maffeo Pasini, 1527; henceforward *Expositio in Apocalypsim*), p. 95v.

²⁹ See Marjorie Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages. A Study in Joachimism* (Oxford:

In a famous passage of the *Liber concordiae*, the abbot even outlined a precise chronology of the succession of the three orders either by situating them within sacred history or by calculating the number of generations that elapsed between each phase of their threefold development. Thus, whereas the first order had had its origins in Adam and had fructified from the time of Abraham, its consummation had coincided with the coming of Christ, which had also marked the apogee of the *ordo clericorum*. The consummation of the second order, which had existed since the time of Uzziah, would happen instead at the 42nd generation after Christ's incarnation (that is to say around 1260), while the last order, whose origins date back to Saint Benedict, would endure until the end of time.³⁰ A further analogy, drawn from the Gospel of John, allowed Joachim to better illustrate the transition between the second and the third *ordines*, which could be compared to Peter and the anonymous beloved disciple (allegedly identified as John) running to the sepulchre of Christ.³¹ In this perspective, the figure of Peter, the first disciple who entered Christ's sepulchre (despite having arrived there after the beloved disciple), represented the *ordo clericorum*, which had preceded the third order. Christ himself had nonetheless predicted Peter's martyr as well as prophesying that John would remain until his coming.³² Likewise, when the *ordo clericorum* would reach its consummation, the third order would preach the "Gospel of the Reign" and last until the end of time.³³ As a consequence, Joachim often defined the contrast between the active life of the former order and the contemplative life of the latter in terms of the opposition between the Church of Peter (*Ecclesia laborantium*) and the Church of John (*Ecclesia contemplantium*).³⁴

The insertion of this symbolism into Joachim's Trinitarian conception of mankind's history could potentially imply – and this was the way in which it was interpreted by many after him – that the end of the age of the Son would consequently entail the end of the Church

Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 137.

³⁰ "Sicut ordo coniugatorum initiatus ab Adam, fructificavit ab Abraam [...], consumatus est in Christo [...]. Et ordo clericorum, initiatus ab Ozia, fructificavit a Christo et consumabitur, ut putamus, circa finem generationis 42^e ab incarnatione Domini [...]. Ita ordo monasticus accipiens, ut iam dixi, initium secundum regulam monasticam quam latini utuntur a beato Benedicto tempus fructificandi generatione 20^a ab eodem sancto viro. Cuius consumatio in consumatione seculi est". *Liber concordiae*, p. 57r.

³¹ See *Jn.* 20, 1-10.

³² See *Jn.* 21, 15-24.

³³ "Primus ergo duorum patietur cum Petro ad complendum numerum sanctorum martyrum; secundus relinquetur cum Ioanne ad predicandum Evangelium Regni [...]. De hac serotina predicatione quam facturus est ordo ille quem designat Ioannes, consumato iam pene illo ordine quem designat Petrus". *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, p. 142r, 142v.

³⁴ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, p. 395.

of Peter (the clerical order), which would give way to the spiritual and contemplative Church of John. Nevertheless, as Marjorie Reeves has pointed out, the opposition between the contemplative existence of the *Ecclesia spiritualis* and the active life of the *Ecclesia laborantium* did not signify, in Joachim's perspective, an alternation between two different institutional forms, but rather "a transition from one quality of living to a higher" within the same "great immovable institution", the *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* whose perennial existence is never questioned by the abbot.³⁵ In this respect, the Church of Peter was therefore a qualitative attribute of the Roman Church, that is to say the one Catholic Church (*una Ecclesia catholica*), which Joachim sometimes termed "spiritual Jerusalem" (*spiritualis Hierusalem*) or "new Jerusalem" (*nova Hierusalem*). Not only was the Roman Catholic Church to survive as a common sempiternal framework, but the papacy too would persist even during the age of the Spirit, thus constituting an essential element of continuity in the course of the shift from the Church of Peter to the Church of John. Once again, biblical images helped Joachim elaborate on the overlap between the qualitative conversion of one Church into the other and the durability of the papacy as the linchpin of the whole system. Like king David, who "had ruled in Hebron and subsequently in Jerusalem", the Roman pontiffs would thus "preside over the *Ecclesiae laborantium* and then over the *Ecclesiae quiescentium*; the former being composed of those who labour in active life, the latter of those who exult in contemplative life".³⁶ In the third age, following "the general tribulation and the threshing of the wheat from all chaff", the rise of the pontiff of the "new Jerusalem, i.e. the *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*" would be, to a certain extent, the metaphorical repetition of the return to Israel of Zerubbabel and his priest, who had led the Jewish people away from Babylon and undertaken the rebuilding of the Temple.³⁷ All the other examples provided by Joachim were aimed at characterising the pontiff of the new era as a strong charismatic figure emerging from a phase of tribulation and gathering all the people of the world. The biblical equivalents of this pope were for example Mordecai, who had delivered the Jews – during their

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 396, 395.

³⁶ "Prius ergo regnavit David in Hebron et postea in Hierusalem. Quia occurrit pontificibus romanis preeesse Ecclesiae laborantium, postea Ecclesiae quiescentium; prius desudantium in vita activa, postea exultantium in vita contemplativa". *Liber concordiae*, p. 92v.

³⁷ "In qua vero generatione peracta prius tribulatione generali et purgato diligenter tritico ab universis zizaniis, ascendet quasi novus dux de Babylone universalis scilicet pontifex novae Hierusalem, hoc est sanctae matris Ecclesiae". Ibid., p. 56r.

Babylonian captivity – from the destruction schemed by Xerxes’s vizier Haman, or the valiant warrior Judas Maccabeus, who had led the revolt against the Seleucid king Antiochus IV and succeeded in liberating Jerusalem and the Temple. Lastly, in the age of the Spirit, the pontiff’s domination, extending “from sea to sea and from river until the boundaries of the Earth”, would be the ideal continuation of Joseph’s syncretic authority both over the Jews and over the Egyptians.³⁸

2.2. The Legitimate Pope of an Invisible Church

The conception of the Roman pontiff of the third age as the pivotal linkage between the spiritual Church of John – supplanting that of Peter – and the ironclad structure of the *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* finds a stunning iconographic expression in the frontispiece of the book as described by Lorenzo Davidico and interpreted by Alvise Priuli. Hence the prominent position of the Angelic Pope in the illustration, where he stands at the centre and dominates the consistory that surrounds him. By virtue of the multi-layered nature of the iconographic language, the assembly of cardinals can be regarded as a two-ply symbol that stands both for the ideal of the One Catholic Church – the institution that endures through the ages – and for the Church of Peter as the second Joachimist order, made up of those who preach and labour (*Ecclesia laborantium*). Depending on the meaning which is assigned to the consistory in this context, the relative significance of the figure of the Angelic Pope reveals different facets accordingly. In so far as the assembly of cardinals is interpreted as representing the ideal continuity of the Catholic Church, the central place of the *pastor angelicus* spotlights him as an integral part of the *Mater Ecclesia* as well as the guarantor of its very continuity. If the consistory is read instead as a figure of the Church of Peter, the Angelic Pope, by contrast, turns into the forefront of the Church of John, and his leading position implicitly signifies the superiority of this spiritual Church over the *Ecclesia laborantium*. Contrary to the latter, the Church of John is not depicted as a collective entity, for the distinguishing features of its

³⁸ “Ut fiat unus populus cum gentili: et erit dominatio populi sanctorum designati in Ioseph. In ipso enim erit tunc successio romani pontificis a mari usque ad mare et a flumine usque ad terminos orbis terrarum”. Ibid., p. 89r.

members are embodied by the Angelic Pope and summed up in the biblical inscriptions, all of which bear passages from the Gospel of John, except for one quotation from the Psalms. The “unction of the Spirit”, with which the Angelic Pope is invested through the golden ray, is indeed shared by every person whom God “will teach all things”. The representation of the Church of John as potentially incorporated in a single figure is therefore a way to underline the pre-eminence, within this specific context, of the individual dimension rather than the collective one, as Pole himself had done in *De reformatione*, where he had designated the willingness to let oneself be guided and instructed by the holy spirit as the indispensable precondition for any attempt at religious reform.

This reading of the miniature as a figurative juxtaposition of the two churches is corroborated by Priuli’s subtle explanation. Not only does his riddle, just like the frontispiece, hint at the existence of two different churches, but it also adumbrates a value judgement about their respective importance. Yet, despite an evident preference for one of them, Priuli stated unequivocally that the two churches – as well as the two corresponding popes – did coexist at the same time. Given that, in the Joachimist tripartite theology of history, the overlap between the *Ecclesia laborantium* and the *Ecclesia quiescentium* actually occurred between the last development stage of the second order and the early phase of the third, Priuli might have adopted this pattern by simply shifting forward the date which Joachim of Fiore had indicated as the possible end of the *ordo clericorum*. In any case, independently of whether in Priuli’s view the “worldly Church” would be superseded by the *Ecclesia spiritualis* as and when prophesied by the Calabrian abbot, the overlap between the two churches – however transitory or long-lasting – did not entail any contradiction or friction, since it was the obvious manifestation of their coexistence as different organs of the same body (the “new Jerusalem”, in Joachim’s words). In this sense, the exoteric Church of Peter, with its visible hierarchy, can be seen as the head of this body, whereas its hidden heart can be identified as the spiritual and esoteric Church of John or, to be more precise, the Church of the anonymous “beloved disciple”, who had leaned on Jesus’s breast at the last supper.³⁹

Not only does the esoteric nature of the Church of John provide a further reason for the absence of a more easily recognisable representation of it in the above-mentioned miniature,

³⁹ See *Jn.* 21, 20.

but it may also account for a more significant fact. It must be remembered that, according to Priuli's riddle, the leader of this spiritual Church – the pope “chosen by God and by men” – refuses the papacy, as opposed to the other pope (elected only by men), who accepts it. Now, at the time when Priuli was supposed to utter these words, between 1552 and 1553, Julius III was the current pope, Pole having missed the chance to be elected in the conclave of 1549-1550. As a consequence, the riddle could sound as an attempt by Priuli (and, in all likelihood, by Pole himself) to come to terms with the bitter disappointment at the entirely unexpected defeat. Yet, the apparently unflappable attitude of Pole after the conclave – if not his sense of relief – is documented by other sources. On 6 February 1550, for example, the writer Giovanni Francesco Arrivabene, who associated with the cardinal of Mantua Ercole Gonzaga,⁴⁰ wrote to Sabino Calandra that Pole “praised God for the impossibility of becoming pope”.⁴¹ On 15 June 1550, Pole himself, in a letter to the bishop of Badajoz Francisco of Navarre, maintained that he was “not ready to undertake such a great task”.⁴² Whether sincere or not, his statement is supported by a letter which Marcantonio Flaminio wrote in the early phase of the conclave, on 14 December 1549, when Pole was still very close to the election: “I will be equally happy – Flaminio said to Ulisse Bassiano – to see our cardinal coming out of the conclave either as cardinal or as pope, and I assure you that he will be happier to come out as cardinal than as pope, though nobody could believe this without knowing so intimately His Signory as I do”.⁴³ Many years later, in 1566, Pietro Carnesecchi would go as far as to say to the inquisitors that Pole would have been “extremely happy” to die “when he emerged so glorious from the conclave of Julius [III]”.⁴⁴ Though influenced by Pole's hagiographic myth, which he himself contributed to create (as well as his friends, through the biographies written after his death), these testimonies are actually grounded on the disinterested behaviour he displayed during the conclave. This became especially manifest, for example, when he refused the imperial party's proposal to elect him “by means of adoration”, thus skipping the

⁴⁰ On Giovanni Francesco Arrivabene, see Simona Carando's entry in *DBI*, IV.

⁴¹ “Lodava Domenedio de l'impossibilità d'essere pontifice”. Mantua, AS, *Archivio Gonzaga*, 888, f. 106rv.

⁴² “Deterritum magnitudine operis, minus parato ad id subeundum animo”. Pole, *Epistolae*, IV, pp. 52-65.

⁴³ “Quanto al papato, tenete certissimo ch'io vederò uscire il nostro cardinale così volentieri cardinale come papa, et vi certifico ch'egli uscirà più volentieri cardinale che papa, benché nessuno lo potria credere, non cognoscendo intimamente Sua Signoria come fo io”. Flaminio, *Lettere*, p. 191.

⁴⁴ “Gran felicità, quando uscì così glorioso dal conclave di Giulio”. *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/1, p. 492.

usual procedures. On that occasion, he was reported to say that “he did not want to enter through the window but through the door”.⁴⁵

In the meantime, in his own cell Pole devoted himself to writing the dialogue *De summo pontifice, Christi in terris vicario* [*On the Supreme Pontiff, Christ's Vicar on Earth*], in which he expounded on the nature and the foundations of papal authority, as he had already done at the time of *De unitate*. The dialogue, which would be published only 19 years later in Louvain,⁴⁶ was dedicated to the young cardinal Giulio Della Rovere on 20 January 1550.⁴⁷ After the conclave, Pole returned to this piece of work and developed its themes in a second dialogue that remained unpublished. Like the original version, which the new treatise complemented, as an hypothetical sequel, the second dialogue was probably written first in Italian⁴⁸ and then translated into Latin,⁴⁹ although it added Priuli to the first two characters (Pole and Della Rovere). Its purpose was to “explain more fully the peculiar nature” of “the office of the supreme pontiff”.⁵⁰ By implicitly reversing Machiavelli's theses, Pole found in history the reasons for the intrinsic superiority of Christ's vicar, who was led by the divine spirit and bound, therefore, to be “like a sun” [“come un sole”] for the “secular ruler” [“magistrato secolare”], the latter being entitled instead to the “government of the night” [“governo della notte”] by means of his “human prudence” [“prudenza umana”].⁵¹ The example set by the supreme pontiff, whose office largely consisted in “bringing his life into compliance” [“conformar la vita”] with the evangelical doctrine, was therefore indispensable (if followed by the other pastors and the flock) for triggering “the true and perfect reform” [“vera et perfetta riforma”] and restoring peace, thus bringing about the conversion of the heretics and the infidels.⁵²

⁴⁵ “Non voleva entrare per fenestram sed per ostium”. Eugenio Albéri (ed.), *Relazioni degli ambasciatori veneti al Senato*, 3 series, 15 vols. (Firenze: 1839-1863), III, p. 346.

⁴⁶ *De summo pontifice, Christi in terris vicario, eiusque officio et potestate* (Louvain: apud Ioannem Foulerrum [John Fowler], 1569).

⁴⁷ See the dedicatory epistle in Pole, *Epistolae*, IV, pp. 47-50; cf. the manuscript version of this letter in ACDF, *Stanza storica*, E-6 a, fasc. 5, ff. 1r-3r, and the printed version in *De summo pontifice*, pp. iii[r]-[viii].

⁴⁸ ACDF, *Stanza storica*, E-6 a, fasc. 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., fasc. 7.

⁵⁰ “Esplicare più pienamente la propria natura” dell’“officio del sommo pontificato”. Ibid., fasc. 4, ff. 8r-1r.

⁵¹ Ibid., f. 145v.

⁵² Ibid., ff. 147v, 148r. On the second version of Pole's dialogue, see Francesco Gui, ‘Per il papa o per Lutero? Reginald Pole e il *De Pontificis maximi officio*’, in Merola et al. (eds.), *Storia sociale e politica. Omaggio a Rosario Villari* (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2007), pp. 186-217.

Pole's stance in the conclave, as well as the opinions he expressed both in his *De reformatione* and in *De summo pontifice*, clearly reveal that at the root of his disinterest lay deepest reasons other than his well-known irresoluteness. These reasons can be understood in the light of the previous analysis. If Pole considered himself as the leading figure of the esoteric *Ecclesia spiritualis*, he was genuinely convinced that it was God and not men to make history. He could only wait for the moment when the will of God and the will of men would coincide; in other words, he had to await the time in which he would eventually be "chosen by God and by men", as the Angelic Pope of the prophecies. Meanwhile this did not prevent him, however, from carrying out the reform of the spiritual Church which he believed to lead, a reform which necessarily ought to be implemented by other means than the reform of the Church of Peter. Hence Pole and the *spirituali*'s attempt to target the society at large by publishing and circulating books, selecting preachers and carefully planning the activities of pastoral care.

3.1. An Unreliable Witness? Cardinal Morone and the Davidico Affair

At this point, it is necessary to step back and assess the reliability of the information provided by Lorenzo Davidico in the course of his Inquisition trial. Admittedly, two major considerations suggest that one cannot easily believe Davidico's words without first examining them carefully within the context both of the vicissitudes that brought him before the inquisitors and of the mutable stances he adopted during the trial by vainly trying to guess and conform to the expectations of the judges. In the first place, and in our current state of knowledge, Davidico's testimony is the only evidence of the existence of the book that included the papal prophecy (*Vita angelici papae*) as well as Pole's treatise *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, whose most significant themes were graphically condensed in the frontispiece. Whereas there are several manuscript versions of *De reformatione*, no copy of the *Life of the Angelic Pope* is known. Furthermore, there is no trace of the miniature of the Angelic Pope, which ought to have prefigured, according to Davidico, Pole's papal coat of arms. In the second place, the whole series of Davidico's depositions between 1555 and 1557 poses

serious issues about the credibility of this character, who ended up being ignored by the inquisitors themselves, owing to his very frequent contradictions, exaggerations as well as his maladroit attempts to be released by convincing the judges that he could help the Inquisition flush out many heretics. A document of the Holy office, dating from the late 1560s, stated that “those most reverend sirs [...] never had a good opinion of him, nor did they put their faith in his depositions, mainly because there were contradictions between him and Morone, and they did not think he deposed with a zeal for the faith”. The inquisitors concluded that “one should not trust him too much unless what he says is corroborated by the other witnesses and by the confession of the cardinal [Morone]”.⁵³

The problematic relationships between Giovanni Morone and Davidico, at the time when the cardinal invited the latter to Novara, was indeed the indirect source of Davidico’s subsequent troubles with the Holy Office. At the end of April 1553, in his new capacity as Morone’s vicar forane, Davidico had undertaken a pastoral visit to the diocese, but it took only a couple of months before numerous complaints about his wrongdoings and the abuses of his position reached the cardinal’s ears. As a result, on 27 July 1553 Morone issued an edict announcing that Davidico’s acts would be investigated.⁵⁴ The vicar was immediately arrested and tried on charges of corruption, extortion, arbitrary convictions and violent behaviour.⁵⁵ Notwithstanding the gravity of the accusations, the final sentence was relatively light: the episcopal tribunal eventually conceded that Davidico had often acted imprudently rather than out of malice.⁵⁶ The acknowledgement of his alleged good faith and lack of experience spared him a prison sentence so that he muddled through by just paying 100 *scudi* compensation, part of which was even refunded by Morone himself.⁵⁷

⁵³ “Fu huomo che faceva professione di spirituale, et come tale s’introduceva nell’amicitia di molti huomini da bene et di qualità, et fu vicario in Novara del cardinal Morone. Ma veramente era un tristo et per molte tristitie fu mandato in galera. Né quei reverendissimi signori del Santo Ufficio ebbero mai buona opinione di lui né diedero molta fede alle sue depositioni, massimamente perché furono alcuni dispareri tra ’l cardinal Morone et lui, et non ebbero opinione ch’egli deponesse per zelo della fede. Et se li deveria far poco fondamento se non in quanto è aiutato dagl’altri testimoni et dalla confessione del cardinale”. *Processo Morone*, VI, pp. 157-158.

⁵⁴ Morone’s edict is published in *Processi Davidico*, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. XXIII-XXV.

⁵⁶ “Multa potius per imprudentiam quam per dolum comisisse”. *Ibid.*, p. 86 (sentence against Lorenzo Davidico; Novara, 19 August 1553; see pp. 84-88).

⁵⁷ Cf. the account given by Domenico Morando, a close collaborator of cardinal Morone, *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 1201-1202 (I questioning of Domenico Morando; Rome, 24 May 1557). In his *Confessio*, which he wrote in Castel Sant’Angelo on 18 June 1557, Morone himself stated that he had often given alms to “those whom I believed to be good men, although I often found myself being deceived, as was the case with a priest, father Lorenzo Davittico, to whom I gave several dozens of *scudi*” [“quelli ch’io credeva fossero huomini da

It is not unlikely that the cardinal opted for a conciliatory solution in view of Davidico's fiery temper, which Morone experienced over the course of the vicar's pastoral visit and especially during the trial. This strategy, nonetheless, did not succeed in preventing Davidico from giving vent to his anger at what he perceived as an affront to his public image, which he had always tried to enhance through his books and his high-ranking connections. The way to fulfil his confuse vindictive intentions took shape soon after his departure from Novara. In September 1553, during a short stay in Salò, he had the opportunity to meet Pole at Isola del Garda, where the cardinal, accompanied by Alvisi Priuli, was waiting to leave for his mission to England.⁵⁸ On this occasion, Davidico also had a private conversation with Priuli. The latter, after a query about Davidico's recent controversies with Morone, expressed his concern over certain "important secrets" he and Pole had only shared with "two gentlemen" that did not belong to the cardinal's household. One of them – Priuli was certain – "would sacrifice his life for us out of loyalty, the other has retired somewhat, and I know you have him on a string".⁵⁹ When asked by the inquisitors about the identity of the two gentlemen, Davidico maintained that, although Priuli had not named them, "in my heart I knew them, because I knew the one I had on a string [...]: he's one of my confessants [...], who mentioned that, together with him, there was another one, a confidant of the cardinal of England". This alleged confidant of Pole was, in Davidico's words, the very author of "those revelations and constellations of the Angelic Pope".⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, Davidico claimed that Priuli's repeated attempts to get him reveal the secrets he had supposedly learnt were frustrated by his elusive answers, under the pretext of hiding behind the duty of confidentiality for the

bene, anchora che da questi spesse volte mi sono trovato ingannato, come ho fatto da un prete don Lorenzo Davittico al quale ho dato parecchie decine di scudi"]. Ibid., p. 444.

⁵⁸ "Et quando el cardinale stava a l'isola del laco de Guarda per andare in la Elemagna, io mi trovai per passaggio a Salò, alloggiato in casa de uno amico, quale me disse: «El cardinale de Ingilterra è qui: voglio che l'andamo a visitare». *Processi Davidico*, p. 221 (XIV questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 30 July 1556).

⁵⁹ "Me ritirò in camera esso messer Aloysio in una de quelle celle de frati dove lui alloggiava. Et cossi entrassimo in ragionamento, dicendo lui: «Che travaglio è stato questo fra voi et monsignor Morone?». Et hauta la mia risposta, entrò in tal parole: «Messer Lorenzo, in Roma io desideravo de parlarve: satisfarrò qui, poichè non venestivo »; et suspirando disse: «El cardinale – cioè el Polo – et io non ce siamo mai fidati de alcuni nostri secreti de importantia, eccetto che de doi gentilhomini for de casa, uno de' quali so che metterebbe la vita per noi per fidelità, l'altro se è alquanto retirato et so che l'avete voi nelle mano: vi prego a dirme la verità si vi ha detto qualche cosa de essi secreti, et tenete conto del honore del cardinale et mio più potete". Ibid.

⁶⁰ "Non me li nominò, ma io li sapevo in pectore meo, perché io sapevo quel che havevo nelle mano io, et lui me haveva parlato ad un certo proposito de quel altro, quale è [l'autore di] quelle revelatione et costellatione del papa angelic o [...]. È uno delli miei confitenti, el quale non nominò per nome l'altro, ma mi accennò che ce ne era un altro insieme con lui, confidente con el cardinale de Ingilterra, et che quelli doi sapevano el tutto". Ibid., p. 222.

confessor. Giving that those secrets were “so important that, compared to them, saying that the purgatory is not mentioned in the Scripture is nothing”, as a last resort Priuli tried to convince Davidico to accompany him and the cardinal on their forthcoming trip to Germany.⁶¹ The ambitious priest must have certainly connected Priuli’s embarrassment at this compromising information with the rumours about cardinal Morone’s suspect doctrinal views, which Davidico had heard as early as 1552, before his departure for Novara.⁶² Thus he realised that, by taking advantage of the insinuations about Morone, he could turn his humiliating experience into an opportunity both for revenge and for a personal relaunch. Shortly after his arrival in Rome, Davidico contacted cardinal Rodolfo Pio of Carpi, a member of the congregation of the Holy Office with whom he was acquainted,⁶³ to report his suspicions about Morone. His sole purpose in doing this, as he put it later on, was to ease his conscience “in the seal of confession”, for he was not formally examined by the cardinal and thought “it sufficed to say my opinion and voice my suspicion”.⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Io li resposi che non sapevo niente, et lui più affondato in questo monstrava quasi como quello che non credeva che io non lo sapessi (como sapevo in pectore meo). Li resposi per finirla: «Monsignor mio, si quid scio in hoc, scio per confessionem: quod autem scio per confessionem minus scio quam id quod nescio». Odito questo lui remase morto in volto et pregomme ad essere contento ut supra. Et perché le cose sonno de tanta importantia che è altro che dire che el purgatorio non sia nella Scrittura, usò ogni diligentia et arcte per menarme seco nella Elemagna et per fermarme con el cardinale. Il che recusando io con allegare cause mie, tornò ad instarme con iuramento de tenere conto del honore del cardinale”. Ibid., pp. 221-222.

⁶² In the course of the Inquisition trial against Giovanni Morone, the inquisitor of Perugia, Matteo Lachi, declared that he had tried to dissuade Davidico from accepting Morone’s invitation to Novara. “Parlandomi un giorno messer Lorenzo Davitico, prete predicatore di Sua Signoria reverendissima [...], io li dissi in segreto: «Messer Lorenzo, non vi impacciate seco, ché ve ne pentirete, perché l’ho in tal canone di sospetto di heresie”. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 150 (deposition of Matteo Lachi; Borgo San Lorenzo, 15-16 July 1555). In a letter to the commissioner general of the Holy Office, Davidico wrote that, on his trip to Novara, he had also been warned by a friend of his in Ferrara (“fra gli catholici di Modena gli è che dire dil cardinale Morono: non gli satisfà molto l’andar suo. Pur fatti quello vi piace”). In the same letter, Davidico added that, after leaving Novara, he had met a friend in Brescia, who said he had heard “strange things about him regarding our faith” (“sento delle stranie cose de lui circa la fede nostra”). *Processi Davidico*, pp. 145, 146 (letter of Lorenzo Davidico to Michele Ghislieri; Rome, end of October 1555).

⁶³ In 1550 Davidico had dedicated his book *Steccato spirituale* [*Spiritual Fence*] to cardinal Rodolfo Pio. See *Processi Davidico*, pp. XLI-XLII

⁶⁴ “Quando me allargai nel sigillo de confessione con el reverendissimo cardinale de Carpi, mi mossi solo per scarico della mia conscientia, essendo lui delli signori deputati – et suspiravit – et da me più delli altri praticati. Il che anche me satisfaceva in conscientia quando partitte, parendomi bastare haver dicto el mio concepto et suspecto ad esso monsignore di Carpo, se ben non era examinato”. Ibid., p. 122 (II questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 10 October 1555). See also pp. 127-128: “Parlai con monsignore reverendissimo de Carpi in sigillo de confessione de ciò [...], essendo lui delli signori deputati contra li heretici [...], perché allhora haveva tal mala opinione de esso reverendissimo Morone per lo suspecto notabile et evidente datomi da molti” (III questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 12 October 1555).

Davidico could not imagine, however, that this would cause him a lot of trouble with the Inquisition, whose consequent actions were only temporarily delayed by contingent circumstances. Following the election of Julius III in 1550, the steps taken by the new pope to stem the excessive autonomy and activism of the Holy Office – which risked to get out of control – had put Gian Pietro Carafa and his colleagues on the defensive. One of the measures that aimed to check the Inquisition's intrusion into the Sacred College was the prohibition of any inquiry about bishops and cardinals, unless expressly authorised by the pontiff.⁶⁵ In spite of this, the cardinals who saw themselves as the guardian of orthodoxy had secretly continued to collect information on the prelates they opposed, such as Pole and Morone. The conflict between Julius III and the Holy Office seemed to reach its climax when the pope was informed that in the first months of 1552 the Dominican friar Bernardo Bartoli, who was on trial for his heretical opinions,⁶⁶ had been examined on the doctrinal views not only of Pole, Morone and Pietro Antonio Di Capua (archbishop of Otranto), but even of the late Contarini, who had died ten years earlier.⁶⁷ When Bartoli's accusations were reported to the pope, he immediately sent the Master of the Sacred Palace, Girolamo Muzzarelli, as well as the inquisitor Girolamo Federici,⁶⁸ to conduct unofficial cross-examinations. By having recourse to threats of torture and other intimidations, the two men (with the help of the superior general of the Dominican order, Stefano Usodimare) managed to obtain a retraction. Eventually the Inquisition trial of Bartoli – who would be later discredited as a madman that “did not even know what he himself said”⁶⁹ – ended in July 1552, when the Dominican friar publicly

⁶⁵ See Massimo Firpo, *La presa di potere dell'Inquisizione romana. 1550-1553* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2014), pp. 52-113.

⁶⁶ See Bartoli's *repetitio* (Rome, 15-30 November 1557): “Et testis alias fuit maculatus de haeresi et propterea detentus in monasterio Mariae supra Minervam. Et fuit maculatus de articulo iustificationis ad mentem Lutheri et «octo o dieci articoli dubii depenedenti da questo articolo». *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 654-655.

⁶⁷ During the Inquisition trial against Giovanni Morone, Bartoli said: “Io ho deposto et nominato più prelati, videlicet il cardinale Contarino, il cardinale d'Inghilterra, il cardinale Morone, l'arcivescovo d'Otranto, messer Pietro Carnesechi fiorentino, messer Luigi Priuoli venetiano, messer Marcantonio Flaminio et don Pagolo Pagoli fiorentino smonacato delli monaci negri di san Benedetto, la marchesa di Peschara et il signor Rainieri Gualanti napolitano”. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69 (deposition of Bernardo Bartoli; San Gimignano; 7-10 July 1555). See also pp. 70-92.

⁶⁸ On Girolamo Federici, see Annalisa Antonucci's entry in *D.B.I.*, XLV, pp. 639-642.

⁶⁹ These were Stefano Usodimare's words, which were quoted by Girolamo Federici in the course of the defence trial of Giovanni Morone. For his part, Girolamo Federici too claimed that Bartoli was “changeable, irresolute and, to conclude, a beast” (“della inconstantia, sempietà, buscea del fra' Bernardo articolato ne posso fare fede, perché io l'ho essaminato, io lo ho ritrovato vario, irresoluto et per concludere una bestia. Et la bona memoria del generale fra' Stephano mi diceva che era un sempio et un da poco, inconstante, et che non sapeva lui medesimo quello che se dicesse”). *Processo Morone*, NE, II, p. 1020 (deposition of Girolamo Federici;

abjured in the presence of numerous authoritative inquisitors and prelates⁷⁰. It was in the aftermath of this event that Julius III tried to put the seal on the end of the affair by staging the grotesque 1553 meeting of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, where Pole received an insincere apology from Carafa.⁷¹

3.2 A Nuisance to the Holy Office

In this context, it is clear why the cardinal of Carpi preferred to wait for a more favourable opportunity to formalise Davidico's accusations against Morone, whose Inquisition trial was undertaken in 1555, immediately after the ascension of Gian Pietro Carafa to the papal throne. Father Lorenzo was therefore summoned to Rome, where he was examined on 9 June 1555. The purpose of the inquisitors – as they tried to make clear by repeatedly asking whether the witness knew or suspected that some “high-ranking prelate in the Church” held suspect beliefs⁷² – was to get Davidico to repeat what he had already reported not only to the cardinal of Carpi, but also to the inquisitor of Perugia, Matteo Lachi, on the occasion of a meeting in Spoleto at the beginning of 1554.⁷³ In their intentions, Davidico's testimony, along with other similar depositions, would constitute the evidence of Morone's public reputation for heresy, thus allowing the Holy Office to proceed against the cardinal.⁷⁴ Yet, Davidico did not understand what the Inquisition expected from him and consequently failed to carry out the simple role he was supposed to play in the trial. Hence a series of disastrous mistakes that made his position worse and worse. First of all, following his request for more “time to think”,⁷⁵ he broke the promise to present himself again and decided instead to flee Rome. Ten

Rome, 8 January 1560).

⁷⁰ On the Bartoli affair, see Firpo, *La presa di potere*, pp. 114-166 (chapter III); Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma*, p. 277-295.

⁷¹ See above, p. 55. On this episode, see Firpo, *Inquisizione romana e Controriforma*, pp. 48-49, 295-301; Firpo, *La presa di potere*, chapter III.

⁷² “Interrogatus an aliquid audiverit vel sibi relatum fuerit de aliquo praelato quod sibi induxerit suspicionem talem praelatum non bene sentire de fide cattolica vel taliter qualiter sibi fuerit propterea suspectum de haeresi [...]; an aliquid testis dixerit scire vel audivisse de aliquo praelato magno in Ecclesia contra fidem catholicam vel quod propterea sibi testi generaverit suspicionem”. *Processi Davidico*, p. 105 (deposition of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 9 June 1555).

⁷³ See *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 150-153 (deposition of Matteo Lachi).

⁷⁴ *Processi Davidico*, p. XXXVI.

⁷⁵ “In queste cose io non vorrei andare accosì precipitosamente et vorrei tempo a pensarvi et mi offero ad ogni

days later, he wrote a letter to the cardinal of Carpi, saying that he “did not want to be an informer for the Inquisition”.⁷⁶ At the end of the summer, having been convinced by some acquaintances, he returned to Rome, where this time he was arrested and put on trial.

Once again, however, Davidico disappointed the inquisitors’ hopes of hearing a restatement of his earlier accusations against cardinal Morone. A ruinous misunderstanding led him, on the contrary, to substantially recant his insinuations about the cardinal’s heretical beliefs, for fear that his relationships with a figure he had contributed to discrediting were the source of the awkward position in which he found himself. At first, he declared that he would not speak again about what he had heard from Morone; he actually regretted having talked about that in his confession.⁷⁷ Two days later, when the commissioner of the Holy Office Tommaso Scotti of Vigevano continued to press him on his previous revelations to Matteo Lachi, Davidico maintained that he had changed opinion on Morone. Whereas in the past he had regarded the cardinal as a Lutheran, “owing to the strong and evident suspicion of many people”, he held him now in the highest esteem since Morone’s “long, useful and good [...] spiritual arguments” had persuaded him of the rectitude of the cardinal, whom he praised whenever the opportunity arose.⁷⁸ Not content to keep contradicting himself, Davidico began to insinuate that, given that the inquisitor Lachi bore perhaps a grudge against Morone, he might have added something invented to what he had reported to the Inquisition.⁷⁹ In a letter

rechiata venire et dire la verità quando ce haverrò pensato [...]. Avendo preso el giuramento, io presuppono essere avanti el tribunale de Dio et imperò voglio pensarvi su per non fare errore”. Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁶ “Non voleva essere spione della Inquisitione”. Ibid., p. 115 (I questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 8 October 1555). Cf. Davidico’s second questioning (10 October 1555), p. 116.

⁷⁷ “Accosì non ne ho mai più parlato né sonno per parlarne, trovandomi mal contento nello animo mio *de haverne dicto anche in confessione*, resolvendomi de attendere a me stesso et de lassar tal causa in le man de Dio”. Ibid., p. 120 (II questioning of Lorenzo Davidico). Italics in the original to indicate underlined words.

⁷⁸ “Intrò in diversi ragionamenti spirituali con lunghi discorsi utili et boni, per li quali me dette grande edificatione et restai molto soddisfatto de lui et in bona opinione de la fede et doctrina sua, sì como per molte male impressioni de altri – como di sopra – io lo hebbi prima suspecto et in opinione de luterano [...], perché allhora haveva tal mala opinione de esso reverendissimo Morone per lo suspecto notabile et evidente datomi da molti, como di sopra; così quando ne parlai col padre fra Matteo [Lachi]. Et *addesso*, doppo tal ragionamento hauto con el reverendissimo Morone, che fu l’anno passato, ho hauto ogni bona opinione de Sua Signoria reverendissima. Di modo che non solo non ho parlato mai male de lui con alcuno, ma quando è occorso ne ho dicto bene”. Ibid., pp. 126, 128 (III questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 12 October 1555). In a letter to Michele Ghislieri, Davidico reasserted that he was reconciled with Morone, whom he always praised. Ibid., p. 143.

⁷⁹ “Dubito bene che, essendo il padre fra Macteo multo vehemente et acceso nel dir suo, non habbia adiunto nel referire qualche cosa del suo et che lui non habbia qualche passione contra esso reverendissimo Morone, perché quando andai al servitio suo me disse molto male de lui”. Ibid., p. 136 (IV questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 16 October 1555).

to the commissioner general of the Holy Office, Michele Ghislieri, Davidico went as far as demanding that Lachi (whom he accused of being a traitor) be imprisoned.⁸⁰

As these obviously unacceptable requests show, it did not take long for Davidico to abandon his initial reticence in favour of an imprudent strategy, which was based on the illusion that he could not only discuss as a peer with the inquisitors, but also negotiate his liberation with them. In his eyes, Davidico could take the liberty of deciding what to reveal, when to disclose it and to whom. At the beginning of his third questioning, therefore, he candidly announced that, in view of the absence of the commissioner general, he would omit some details which he intended to reserve for a future meeting with Ghislieri.⁸¹ When the latter, a few days later, started to question him again, Davidico first asked the notary of the Inquisition – although in vain – not to record his words,⁸² and then he put forward an audacious proposal. He boasted that he had, “in all the cities”, a wide network of loyal informers and confessants who could help him drive out “innumerable hidden Lutherans” (“two hundred or more”, he specified), provided that he was released and given the suitable licence.⁸³ Notwithstanding the foreseeable irritated reaction of Ghislieri, who replied sharply

⁸⁰ “Però venga esso in carcere come sono io, ut ius suum unicuique tribuatur, perché è honesto che lui per sostenere tal cosa non meno di me patisca. Io non ho quella prontezza et efficatia nel dire che ha lui, con la quale si farà più presto credere la busia che io el vero [...]. Se gli è scandalo in questo esso l’ha dato più a me dicendomi tanto male fora di confessione del reverendissimo cardinale Morono che io a lui quando li aperse in confessione li mei sospetti ch’io havea di quello. Pensava di trovare uno padre fidele (al quale non harei anche detto questo se non in confessione, et se esso non mi havesse prima tanto detto de quello) e non uno che poi mi tradisse, come ha fatto con lettere et parole immelate, alegandomi che non sarei distenuto ma post interrogationem dimissus: e questo da parte vostra [on Ghislieri’s behalf] disse. Io non ho infamato monsignor Morono patrono mio con li altri reverendissimi prelati ma ben lui, mettendo in publico iuditio quello ch’io havea reposto col sigillo di confessione, per zelo e carità nel secreto iuditio de Dio”. Ibid., pp. 143-144.

⁸¹ “Io desideraria ch’el padre commissario fusse disoccupato acciò potessi trovarsi presente: domane o postdomane con sua maggior commodità dirrò alcuna cosa, sì como ho scripto. Quello che voglio dire hogge è questo”. Ibid., p. 126.

⁸² “Io vorria dire certe parole al padre, et non le scrivete sinché io non li ho referte [...]. Non me pare poterlo dire, se io non ve referisco tutto in narratione da mi a vui”. Ibid., p. 133 (IV questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 16 October 1555).

⁸³ “Voglio [...] essere diligente investigatore de’ luterani in tal modo: io in tutte le città ho molte persone seculare volte al bene che mi prestano obedientia per amore, che frequentano li sacramenti et, dubitando probabilmente io essere innumerabili luterani occulti, col mezo de tali che procedeno con charità secretamente vorrei havere li indicii de loco in loco senza fastidio et strepito, essendo io atto ad excitare li chori di essi figlioli spirituali de loco in loco a far questo per zelo de la cattolica verità et desiderio de spogliare la sua presentia di tale lutheranesca zizania: il che sonno tanto più atto a fare quanto che io ho le mani per tutto. Et così prometto, essendomi dato patente con alcuna autorità, stando 15 o 20 giorni per città, darvene 200 o più nelle mani, maxime che dubito che in alcune particolare città non siano nidi occulti de tali venenosi serpenti, como sarebbe Vicenza, Padua, Venetia, Lucca et Modena, così Genua et Milano, le quali con tal mezo de homini che vanno in verità mediante la divina gratia prometto scoprire, et farvi havere di tempo in tempo tali indicii chiari et evidenti”. Ibid., p. 134.

that he and his colleagues did not need advice but wanted the witness to tell the truth (“if he had anything to say”),⁸⁴ Davidico raised the stakes by reiterating a suggestion he had made in the previous questioning.⁸⁵ Since the seal of confession prevented him from revealing everything he knew, he offered to contact two members of Morone’s household, with whom he was acquainted, for the purpose of inducing them to say, without arousing their suspicion, “whether there is anything bad concealed in this cardinal”.⁸⁶

For cardinal Ghislieri, it was almost the final straw: after this, he conducted but one more questioning in November and subsequently left Davidico to his subordinates. Since the first depositions, the commissioner general had begun to run out of patience with this bizarre priest, but neither Ghislieri’s outbursts of temper nor his explicit orders to say what could prove cardinal Morone’s heresy had any effect.⁸⁷ Four months later – during which time the prisoner had been literally forgotten by the inquisitors – Davidico belatedly regretted that “in the first examinations I did not open my heart to the commissioner [Ghislieri] as I should have done”. He also admitted he had “never managed to finish any questioning with the most reverend commissioner, because my impudence got maybe on his nerves”.⁸⁸ In truth, Ghislieri

⁸⁴ “Et cum dominus videret [eum] narrare impertinentia, dixit ipsi constituto quod deberet dicere culpas suas et quae spectant ad ea de quibus imputatur, et quod non ideo reverendissimi et illustrissimi domini fecerunt ipsum carcerari ut peterent consilium ab eo, sed pro veritate reperienda: et ideo dicat illam, si habet aliquid dicere”. Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 129: “Io ho tal bona opinione de monsignore Morone né sento altramente; pure, se vi è qualche cosa del marcio (il che non credo), mi cavarò la macchia [...] con dextreza, cioè raglionando con dui di soi cortigiani antichi quali, per essere di bona mente et di qualche spiritual conversatione fra li altri mi credeno, amano et hanno qualche interiore unione con me, invitando un giorno mo’ l’uno mo’ l’altro a qualche loco di devotione, penso non si occultarebbono da me in tal nostro secreto raglionamento”. Ibid., p. 129.

⁸⁶ “Desideraria per lo honor de Dio et di questo loco poter parlare con una persona con tal commodità che non li desse suspecto, come sarrebbe invitandola ad andare ad alcune delle septe chiese, acciò che in tal colloquio lo inducessi a dire

per scharico della sua coscientia quello che io dir non posso per la confession sacramentale overo, intendendo io da lui li soi concepti di novo, in commune parlare potessi io dire quello che sarrebbe expediente. In questo me rimetto al sano iudicio del padre; così se vole che col prefato mezo io mi metta a parlamento con due intrinsechi miei de bona mente che stanno in casa de monsignore Morone per vedere se gli è cosa alcuna de male occulta in esso cardinale, perché so che essi non mi negariano tal cosa in secreto raglionamento”. Ibid., p. 134.

⁸⁷ “Et cum dominus [Ghislieri] excandescendo diceret sibi constituto quod ipse non dixerat sinceram veritatem et quod dixerat hinc inde diversis personis ea quae si vera essent concluderent reverendissimum cardinalem Moronum nedum fuisse de haeresi suspectum sed etiam haeticum et externa die medio iuramento interrogatus dixit quaedam frivola et vana et nullius momenti, [Davidico] respondit”. Ibid., p. 119 (II questioning of Lorenzo Davidico). The fifth questioning of Davidico, on 21 November 1555, was the last one conducted by Ghislieri. See *ibid.*, pp. 153-155.

⁸⁸ “Me rincresce che in li primi esami non andasse con esso signor commissario con quella largheza di cuore che doveva [...]. Mai non potei finire alcuno esame con esso reverendissimo commissario perché forse con la mia imprudentia li dava causa di turbatione”. Ibid., p. 157 (I plea of Lorenzo Davidico to the Inquisition cardinals; Rome, 9 March 1556).

and his collaborators had lost all interest in what Davidico might have disclosed. Left to rot in prison, from where he tried to escape more than once, Father Lorenzo had become a nuisance to the Holy Office. Unable to turn off the dangerous road he had taken, and constantly striving to attract the attention of the inquisitors, he went on pestering them with his extremely prolix pleas and memoranda, his improbable proposals for cooperation in the fight against heresy and his ever more bombastic and confused revelations. These involved all sorts of people within the ecclesiastical hierarchy – from humble friars to more or less obscure and evil cardinals – but kept leaving out the only pieces of evidence which the Holy Office needed. “You had a fault – pointed out the notary of the Inquisition at the end of a session of torture –: you have been too reluctant to reveal the truth about that person you know”. “I have been a bit hesitant”, admitted Davidico, who concluded “by saying that word «Morone» in an undertone”.⁸⁹

3.3. *Fragments of Truth*

It was at this stage of the trial, and one month after the tortures, that Davidico mentioned his meetings with Pole and Priuli and described the book in which Pole’s *De reformatione* was preceded by the prophecy in verse about the advent of the Angelic Pope. Admittedly, the context in which this particular questioning took place, as well as the behaviour of Father Lorenzo during the whole trial, seriously undermines his credibility and casts doubt on the validity of his tale about the book showed by Priuli. Nonetheless, some elements of this deposition seem to strengthen, in this case, the hypothesis of its verisimilitude. Firstly, as was explained earlier, the *Tractatus de reformatione Ecclesiae* which Davidico had spotted in Priuli’s box must have been, in all probability, the work of the English cardinal. Despite abundant evidence, in several manuscripts of Pole’s *De reformatione*, that at least some versions of this treatise were intended for the press, there is no proof that it was ever printed. Given that only Pole’s friends and collaborators knew that the cardinal was working on this

⁸⁹ “Cum dominus Sanus [Perelli, the notary of the Roman Inquisition] sibi diceret: «Voi havete hauto un defecto: de havere hauto troppo rispetto in rivelare la verità contra quella persona che voi sapete», ipse constitutus dixit: «Havete hauto ragione, messer Sano, perché ho hauto un poco de rispetto», dicendo illud verbum «Morone» submissa voce”. Ibid., p. 199 (VIII questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 9 June 1556).

book, which circulated in manuscript form exclusively within the cardinal's circle, the only way for Davidico to find out about its existence was by being informed through somebody in personal contact with Pole or his confidants. This was indeed the case in the conversation between Priuli and Davidico, as reported by the latter to the inquisitors. Secondly, the comparison between the contents of *De reformatione* and the features of the miniature of the Angelic Pope (which was to be employed, according to Davidico, as Pole's papal coat of arms) has led to the detection of correspondences that are too many and too close to be a mere coincidence or the product of Father Lorenzo's unlimited imagination. Thirdly, there is a considerable difference between Davidico's description of the frontispiece of the book (as well as his report of Priuli's interpretation) and the depositions during which he expounded profusely the heretical beliefs and the misdeeds of the hidden Lutherans. Whereas, in the former case, his account is detailed and rather sober, in the latter the intriguing and conspiratorial elements take the upper hand, thus adding to the general vagueness of the stories, whose characters are often referred to just by their first name (if they are named at all).

The plausibility of the way in which Davidico claimed to have found out about the book on the Angelic Pope stands out when one contrasts that deposition with the amazing tales of a sinister hidden sect ("not only in Rome but elsewhere") that included "high-ranking figures".⁹⁰ To quote Davidico, this veritable network of misbelievers was made up of

thirty or forty heretics, four or five among many bishops and two cardinals, to omit the suspects, that is to say Anglo [Pole], Morono, Fano [cardinal Pietro Bertano] and Capiteferreo [cardinal Girolamo Capodiferro]. This sect started in 1530 under Clement [VII] (its initiator has died; his successor lives in Rome and I know him) [...]. They take an oath on pain of death etc. to be loyal to each other, they avoid those who can oppress them, they give the appearance of conforming with the Catholics and await their pope to pull then their stunts in the open.⁹¹

⁹⁰ "Tempo li va a providerli, per essere di tal setta, non solo in Roma ma altrove, personachii grandi". Ibid., p. 179 (II plea of Lorenzo Davidico to the Inquisition cardinals; Rome, c. 30 May 1556).

⁹¹ "30 o 40 heretici, 4 o 5 fra tanti vescovi et dui fra cardinali, omissis suspectis, scilicet Anglo, Morono, Fano et Capiteferreo [...]. Tal setta cominzò nel '30 sub Clemente (auctor defunctus est, successor eius vivit Romae et eum agnosco) [...]. Hanno giuramento sub poena mortis etc. di essersi fideli fra loro, che fugono chi li può tassare, che esteriormente sono conformi a' catholici e che stanno in aspettativa del suo papa per fare poi delle sue alla scoperta". Ibid., p. 232 (III plea of Lorenzo Davidico to the Inquisition cardinals; Rome, 31 July 1556).

The figures of the two unnamed cardinals – one of whom was always termed “il mostro” [“the monster”], occurred repeatedly in the declarations of Davidico, who maintained he had heard his confession twice.⁹² “The more the monster enjoys considerable prestige and reputation – warned the prisoner – the more he is dangerous; he is like a rock hidden underwater”.⁹³ Davidico’s worry was therefore “that one might see soon on the Chair of Saint Peter (because he aspires to it) a wolf as universal father, a grand heretic as husband of the holy Church and a monster as pope”.⁹⁴ In a further letter to the cardinal of Carpi, Davidico listed the many “heretical articles” of faith held by “the monster”:

Among others, he does not ascribe any merit to the Christian, he denies free will and the purgatory, he execrates the icons except for the crucifix, he laughs at the ceremonies – for example baptism – that do not occur in the gospel, he claims that the sacraments are two, i.e. baptism and Eucharist, that anybody is justified whenever he sins, he does not recognise auricular confession and the invocation of the saints, he thinks the religions which the gospel does not mention are to be abolished, *he peruses several prohibited books, some of the heretics support him in the Council, he receives many letters from Germany*, he has laid his hands on a corrupted Bible.⁹⁵

Davidico declared that “the monster” himself had showed him the “letters of Germany”, which contained – in the cardinal’s opinion – “the true spirit”.⁹⁶ On another occasion, the

⁹² “L’ho odito dui volte in confessione, una al Natale et l’altra al maggio”. Ibid., p. 170 (VI questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 18 May 1556).

⁹³ “El monstro è tanto più pericoloso quanto che è in predicamento di bone parti di grande autorità et conditione: è a guisa di gran scoglio sotto aqua ascosto”. Ibid., p. 180 (II plea of Lorenzo Davidico to the Inquisition cardinals; Rome, c. 30 May 1556).

⁹⁴ “El timor mio è de non vedere in breve (perché gli aspira) in la cathedra di Pietro uno lupo per padre universale, uno grande heretico per sposo della Chiesa santa et uno monstro per papa”. Ibid., p. 179.

⁹⁵ “Uno di essi cardinal grandi che sta in predicamento et ambitione di papato è in molti articoli heretici: inter caeteros, nullum vult meritum in christiano, liberum arbitrium impugnat, purgatorium negat, imagines praeter crucifixi detestatur; caeremonias – puta baptismi – quae non sunt in evangelio irridet, duo tantum vult sint sacramenta, scilicet baptismus et Christi sanguinem, quo quilibet quoties peccat per fidem iustificatur, auricularem confessionem non admittit et sanctorum invocationem, religiones censet tollendas quia non sunt in evangelio, *complures libros prohibitos lectitat, quorundam haereticorum innititur concilio, ex Germania complures litteras habet, Bibliam corruptam prae manibus habet*”. Ibid., p. 164 (letter of Lorenzo Davidico to Rodolfo Pio of Carpi; Rome, c. 14 May 1556).

⁹⁶ “Et perché Vostra Signoria me dimandò s’haveva visto le lettere di quel cardinal che ho confessato [...], dissi d’haverle viste – come viddi – in un plico legato, conosciute per tale, cioè lettere di Germania, per sola sua relatione qual disse: «Qui dentro ci è il vero spirito»”. Ibid., p. 172 (VII questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome,

prelate had even read a letter “that was signed by Calvino in person, although written by somebody else”.⁹⁷

The second anonymous cardinal mentioned by Davidico (who had not hear him in confession) bore less sinister features, although Father Lorenzo regarded him as heretic

owing to the reports of these informers who, one year ago, revealed to me that, on the night of Maundy Thursday 1555, he [the cardinal] was in a conventicle, wearing lay clothing. Here he took an oath of allegiance and protection to all the brothers who depend on the benefit of Christ’s blood. And among other things, when one of those lay heretics kissed his hand, the cardinal was greeted like this: «Monsignor, you will be pope, and under you our brothers shall gather together in one» [*Jn.*, 11, 52].⁹⁸

As the trial progressed, the sensationalism of such stories became increasingly portentous. Two days after the alleged celebration of the above-mentioned rite, on the night of Holy Saturday 1555, Davidico had spotted two members of the sect profaning the consecrated hosts prepared for Easter by eating some of them in a soup and throwing some others into the fire, while the rest “had been placed in front of a horse to see if it ate them or bowed to them.”⁹⁹ Needless to say, Davidico boasted that one of the two men – a certain Nicolò Zocolini (but Davidico was not sure of his family name) – had given him some insight into the most sinful acts carried out by the heretics of the sect and in particular by their leader. This was, like Nicolò himself, an expert in poisons, which were prepared with the brain taken from corpses, following a formula from Turkey. By this means, the leader of the sect had projected the

21 May 1556).

⁹⁷ “Era sottoscritta dal Calvino proprio, ma scritta da un altro”. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁹⁸ “Quell’altro cardinale io non l’ho odito in confessione né maneggiato in conscientia, ma di certo l’ho per heretico per relatione di essi confitenti, quali hor un anno mi fecero intendere che l a notte del giovedì santo 1555 si trovò in un conventicolo in habito secolare, dove giurò fideltà et perpetua protettione a tutti li fratelli che dependano dal beneficio del sangue di Christo. Et inter caetera, nel bacciarli la mano un de quelli heretici layci, li fu dato tal saluto: «Monsignor, voi sarete papa, et sotto voi fratres nostri congregabuntur in unum»”. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

⁹⁹ “La notte del sabbato santo 1555 havendo visto dui de loro (uno de’ quali è uno messer Nicolò Zocolini, se ben mi ricordo del cognome) molti comunichini consecrati per la sequente comunione della Pasca [...], si lasciorno serar in chiesa e levorno li consecrati remittendo li non consecrati per scontro. E quelli poi in parte forno magnati in zuppa, parte gitati nel fuoco et alcuni posti avante a uno cavallo per tentar se li magnava o faceva riverentia ”. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237 (III plea of Lorenzo Davidico to the Inquisition cardinals; Rome, 31 July 1556).

murder of Davidico, who did not exclude the possibility that pope Marcello II had been poisoned by order of the same person.¹⁰⁰

As the above examples show, the flamboyant style of Davidico's narration is not enough to prevent its essentially repetitive pattern from manifesting itself. In spite of the endless crescendo of grotesque details, these accounts always consist either in a list of the kinds of deviance or – especially in the case of the two anonymous cardinals – in a mere catalogue of the doctrinal errors which were commonly imputed to the Protestants at that time. Moreover, not only does the qualitative difference between Davidico's accusations against the hidden sect and his statements on Pole and Priuli emerge from the style of narration, but it also reveals itself in the peculiar attitude of Davidico towards the English cardinal. With regard to his opinion on Pole's doctrinal beliefs, the prisoner was actually almost as prudent as he had been when asked about Morone. Yet, by his own admission, an illustrious theologian like Ambrogio Catarino Politi had warned him against associating with "Monsignor of England and Monsignor Prioli, because they were heretics".¹⁰¹ For his part, Davidico had to acknowledge that, despite a close observation of both of them on the occasion of their meeting, he had not been able to notice "anything in particular: either because this suspicion about them is unfounded or because – given that they know from personal experience that I have always been the enemy of the heretics – they were reserved with me out of prudence".¹⁰² In his constant attempts to capture the judges' attention, Father Lorenzo tried to give, in any event, some first-hand information on Pole, for he must have sensed that the English cardinal, as well as Morone, aroused the curiosity of the inquisitors. Thus he offered what he had at his disposal, that is to say the account of his conversations with Priuli and his discovery of the book on the Angelic Pope. In his eyes, this was probably not the strongest card he could play, since Pole's interest in the prophetic tradition of the *pastor angelicus* could not be easily inscribed within the categories of heresy which Davidico was used to employ. As will be seen in the next chapter, for centuries the prophetic figure of the Angelic Pope had assumed indeed

¹⁰⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 237-239, 243-244.

¹⁰¹ "Esso monsignore Catherino [...] me disse ancho che io me retirasse dalla pratica de monsignore de Inghilterra et monsignore Prioli, perché erano heretici. Pure mi son chiarito depoi del roverso, a mio iudicio, de questi tali personaggi". *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁰² "Io l'[h]o osservato, l'uno et l'altro [Pole and Priuli], et non mi so[n] accorto de cosa alcuna paricolare: sia questo o perché tal suspitione de loro sia falsa o perché essi per prudentia, sapendo per esperientia [che] sonno stato inimico sempre delli heretici, andassiro intertenuti meco et reservati". *Ibid.*, p. 204 (X questioning of Lorenzo Davidico; Rome, 19 June 1556).

the most diverse meanings, which ranged from the expectation of a providential religious renewal to the apocalyptic speculation about the appearance of the Antichrist in the bosom itself of the Church. In all likelihood, however, Davidico did not realise that the very problematic categorisation of Pole's religious convictions was perhaps more worrying to the Holy Office than all the doctrinal heresies he had listed time and again during his trial.

CHAPTER VI

A European Dream of Religious Unity: the Long Journey of Papal Prophecies

1.1. Expectations of a Holy Pope in Joachim of Fiore and Roger Bacon

The critical evaluation of the information provided by Father Lorenzo Davidico during his Inquisition trial has led to the identification of some arguments in favour of the plausibility of his statements about cardinal Pole, not least because, as hypothesised in the previous chapter, Davidico was probably convinced he had not disclosed any particularly startling revelation about the English cardinal. To some extent, one can say he was right in two ways. Firstly, his depositions were not the only occasion on which the Holy Office was informed about the association between Pole and the prophetic figure of the Angelic Pope. According to the Burgundian Dominican friar Gabriel Martenet, who was asked to give testimony in the course of the trial against cardinal Morone, this connection was actually “common knowledge”. Pole was even defined as “the head of a certain school which the cardinal’s followers called angelic”.¹ Secondly, he was for sure not the first person or prelate who had identified himself with the *pastor angelicus*. As will be explained in the next chapter, the first decades of the XVI century abound with examples of other cardinals or intellectuals who presented themselves – either as a means of self-promotion or out of genuine conviction – as the long-awaited Angelic Pope. The history of this myth, however, goes back a very long way, much earlier than the XVI century, although it is hard to locate its precise origins, which had been virtually forgotten by the time that this kind of papal prophecies were a common heritage in European Christendom. In the first part of the chapter, I will examine precisely the long formation of this myth. In so doing, particular attention will be devoted to the prophetic works that might have exerted an influence on the papal prognostication mentioned by Davidico. I will

¹ “Quantum ad cardinalem Polum pertinet, intellexi primo ex communi fama et potissimum virorum catholicorum gravium et fidedignorum non solum eundem cardinalem vehementer esse de fide suspectum, sed etiam caput cuiusdam scholae quam ipsius cardinalis sequaces appellabant angelicam”. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 591 (Rome, 12 October 1557). See the biographical note on Gabriel Martenet *ibid.*, p. 587. Cf. p. 589.

subsequently take into consideration the different interpretations (and imitations) of these prophecies, especially with regard to the overlap between the imperial ideal of universality and the eschatological belief in the advent of a pontiff-saviour. Furthermore, the peculiar combination of texts and pictures – one of the most significant features of the papal prophecies analysed here – has made it necessary to analyse, in the last part of the chapter, the important role played by graphic means of expression in the propagation of dreams of religious unity and renewal, which were centred on the symbol of a heavenly-sent pontiff.

When dealing with the origins of the theme of the Angelic Pope, the name of Joachim of Fiore always crops up as the fundamental reference point. Even though there are unquestionably good reasons for regarding the Calabrian abbot as the initiator of this prophetic tradition, the assumption that its initial impetus came from him needs to be qualified in view of the fact that the term “Angelic Pope” never occurs in Joachim’s writings. To a considerable degree, the attribution of the image of the *pastor angelicus* to Joachim was a product of the evolution of the symbol itself, which acted as a dynamic pole of attraction for disparate meanings, ideals and expectations. It was through this process that the abbot came to be identified as the father of the symbol of the Angelic Pope. Admittedly, the key features of this prophetic image were already outlined by Joachim in his *Liber concordiae*. The decisive turning point was once again the beginning of the age of the Spirit, in which “the universal pontiff of the New Jerusalem, that is to say the Holy Mother Church, will rise as a leader”. This event was linked, significantly, to St. John’s vision (described in the *Apocalypse*) of “an angel ascending from the rising of the sun, with the seal of the living God”, whereas a vaticination from the Book of Isaiah completed the vivid picture of Peter’s successor being “established on the top of the mountains” and “exalted above the hills”, where “all nations shall flow”. Thus the pontiff would be “at full liberty to renew the Christian religion and to preach the Word”.²

² “Ascendet, quasi novus dux de Babilone, universalis scilicet Pontifex novae Hierusalem, hoc est sanctae matris Ecclesiae; in cuius typo scriptum est in Apocalypsi: «Vidi angelum ascendentem ab ortu solis, habentem signum Dei vivi» [*Apc.*, 7, 2] [...]. Ascendet autem non gressu pedum aut immutatione locorum, sed quia dabitur ei plena libertas ad innovandam christianam religionem et ad praedicandum Verbum”. Joachim Florentis, *Liber concordiae*, p. 56r. “Successor Petri, qui erit in tempore illo quasi fidelissimus vicarius Christi Jesu, elevabitur in sublime, ut compleatur illud quod scriptum est in Isaia propheta: «Erit in novissimis diebus praeparatus mons domus Domini in vertice montium et elevabitur super colles et fluent ad eum omnes gentes et ibunt populi multi et dicent: «Venite, ascendamus ad montem Domini et ad domum Dei Jacob et docebit nos vias suas et ambulabimus in semitis eius» [*Is.*, 2, 2-3]”. Ibid., p. 122v. Cf. Francesco D’Elia, *Gioacchino da Fiore: un*

It took time before the notion of a radically new role ascribed to the papacy in the third *status* began to be developed in all its implications. What is more, the realisation that the year 1260, contrary to Joachim's predictions, had passed without any noticeable upheaval, brought forth some disappointment, although only temporarily. In the words of the XV-century Augustinian chronicler John Capgrave, the general feeling in those years was that Joachim had "failed foule", for he had "erred in his counting" of "the year in which the day of dome schuld falle".³ Even an admirer of the abbot such as Salimbene de Adam from Parma, who had been born in the generation after Joachim, expressed his disenchantment in the famous *Cronica*. Despite admitting his past as "a Joachite", he claimed that, "following the death of the late emperor Frederick, and the passing of the year 1260, I have thoroughly dismissed this doctrine and resolved to believe but what I see".⁴ In this context, Roger Bacon stands out as a remarkable exception, since a few years after 1260, in his *Opus tertium* (1267), he conveyed his confidence in the imminent renewal brought about by a just pontiff:

It has been prophesied for forty years, and there have been many visions, that in these times there will be one pope who will purge canon law and the Church of God from the sophistries and the hoaxes of the lawyers, and there shall be justice universally, without the noise of quarrels. And on account of the goodness, truth and justice of this pope it will happen that the Greeks will revert to the obedience of the Roman Church, and that the Tartars, for the most part, will be converted to the faith, and the Saracens will be destroyed; and there shall be one sheepfold and one shepherd [*Jn.* 10, 16], as this word resounded in the prophet's ears. And one who saw these things by revelation has said so, and he says that he will see these magnificent things realised in his times.⁵

maestro della civiltà europea. Antologia di testi gioachimiti tradotti e commentati, seconda edizione riveduta e ampliata (Soveria Mannelli: Rubbettino, 1999) (I edition: 1991), pp. 66, 76, 193.

³ John Capgrave, *The Chronicle of England*, Francis Charles Hingeston (ed.), vol. I (1858) of *Rerum britannicarum Medi Aevii scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages*, 99 vols. (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1858-1896; henceforward *Rolls Series*), p. 138.

⁴ "Postquam mortuus est Fridericus, qui imperator iam fuit, et annus millesimus ducentessimus sexagesimus est elapsus, dimisi totaliter istam doctrinam et dispono non credere nisi quae videro". *Cronica fratris Salimbene de Adam ordinis Minorum*, Oswaldus Holder-Egger (ed.), vol. XXXII (1913) of *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Scriptores (in Folio)*, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1826-, pp. 302-303.

⁵ "Prophetatum est a quadraginta annis, et multorum visiones habitae sunt, quod unus Papa erit his temporibus qui purgabit ius canonicum et ecclesiam Dei a cavillationibus et fraudibus iuristarum, et fiet iustitia universaliter sine strepitu litis. Et propter istius Papae bonitatem, veritatem, et iustitiam accidet, quod Graeci revertentur ad obedientiam Romanae Ecclesiae, et quod pro maiori parte convertentur Tartari ad fidem, et Saraceni destruentur;

Bacon hoped that pope Clement IV, to whom this work was dedicated, would accomplish soon this universal *renovatio*.⁶ The pontiff's death in 1268, however, did not extinguish Bacon's expectations. A few years later, in his *Compendium philosophiae*, he proclaimed himself convinced of the appearance of a "most splendid pope, who will remove every corruption from the *studium* and the Church and the rest; and the world will be renewed, and the full number of the Gentiles will come in, and the remnants of Israel will be converted to the faith".⁷ In these passages, Joachim of Fiore was not explicitly mentioned as the source of these prognostications, although the reference to "one who saw these things by revelation" could not but evoke the name of the Calabrian abbot. Besides taking up the main features of Joachim's ideal pontiff, Bacon added some elements that, as will be seen, would remain inextricably linked with the symbol of the Angelic Pope. A great deal of subsequent versions of this myth will indeed relate the coming of the *pastor angelicus* to the restoration of the original purity of the Church, the end of the schism between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church, the conversion of the Turks (or the destruction of the infidels) and consequently the recovery of ecclesiastical unity, signified by the evangelical motto *unum ovile, et unus pastor* [one sheepfold and one shepherd]. It has been observed earlier that also in Pole's outlook the question of Church reformation was never dissociated from the aspiration towards religious unity. In his manuscript commentary on Psalm 102, Pole quoted the same passage from John's gospel when expressing the wish that God – who "is not the patron of dissension but rather the author of unity and peace" – would gather "the peoples, divided into several religious cults [...], into the confession of one faith", and that he would subdue "both the Jews and the Gentiles in one Church". This was, in Pole's view, the very reason why Christ had been sent to the world, where he had to take care not only of the Jews

et fiet unum ovile et unus pastor, sicut in auribus prophetae sonuit istud verbum. Et unus qui vidit haec per revelationem dixit, et dicit quod ipse videbit haec magnifica fieri temporibus suis". Roger Bacon, *Opus tertium, Opus minus, Compendium philosophiae*, J. S. Brewer (ed.), vol. XV (1859) of *Rolls Series*, p. 86. Cf. Amanda Power, *Roger Bacon and the Defence of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 63-66 (in particular p. 66 for Bacon's quotation).

⁶ "Et certe infra annum unum possent fieri si Deo placuerit et summo Pontifici, et infra minus: unde temporibus vestris possunt fieri. Et Deus conservat vitam vestram ut haec per vos fiant". Bacon, *Opus tertium*, p. 86.

⁷ "Necesse est ut exstirpetur malitia, et appareant electi Dei; aut praeveniet unus beatissimus papa, qui omnes corruptiones tollet de studio et Ecclesia et caeteris, et renovetur mundus, et intret plenitudo gentium, et reliquiae Israel ad fidem convertantur". Roger Bacon, *Compendium philosophiae* (*Rolls Series*, XV), p. 402.

but also of the Gentiles, as explained in the famous passage from John's gospel: "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep-pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one sheepfold and one shepherd".⁸

1.2. A Pope "Marvellously Sent and Chosen by God": Fra Dolcino and the Apostolic Brethren

Notwithstanding the enunciation of all the characteristics that would later be systematically associated with the myth of the Angelic Pope, Bacon's ideas did not take root in the short term. In a way, the eschatological hope for the advent of an angel-like pontiff could not catch on and find full expression unless as a response to what did not exist yet, namely a widespread perception of a profound and almost metaphysical corruption of the Church or at least of its head. It was not without reason, therefore, that the dream of an angelic pontiff received an enormous impetus from the troubled events surrounding the election of Celestine V, his resignation and the imprisonment by order of his successor Boniface VIII. The two radically different characters – on the one hand the humble hermit Pietro Angelerio and on the other the ambitious and unscrupulous Benedetto Caetani, whose damnation among the simoniacs was foretold in Dante's *Inferno* – came to represent the dramatic contrast between the wicked pope and the angelic saviour of the Holy Mother Church. Thus, even before the prophetic expectations had found full expression in written form, the image of the *pastor angelicus* took shape de facto, through the succession of the two popes⁹. As a matter of fact, the pontificate of Boniface VIII saw the emergence of radical groups that equated the existing ecclesiastical institution to the Whore of Babylon and awaited a "holy pope".

Between the last years of the XIII century and the first two decades of the XIV, this dichotomy was carried to the extreme by the religious movement of the Apostolic Brethren

⁸ "Quia Deus non est dissensionis fautor sed author unitatis et pacis [...]. Ut populos, variis religionum cultibus inter se sectos et divisos, in unius fidei confessionem congregaret, et / tam iudeos scilicet quam gentiles in unam Ecclesiam coaptaret. Cuius rei causa Christus in evangelio se missum esse a patre in mundum testificans, cum iudeos in primis pro ovibus suis agnovisset, adiecit gentiles denotans: «Et alias oves habeo quae non sunt ex hoc ovili, et illas oportet me adducere ut fiat unus pastor et unum ovile»". BAV, *Vat. lat.* 5969, ff. 9v-10r.

⁹ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 401-402.

(or Order of the Apostles), led by Dolcino in Northern Italy. This sect had actually originated earlier in Parma, where Gerardo Segarelli (or Segalelli), a young man who had been refused admission to the local Order of Friars Minor, had begun living on charity and preaching penance. Rather than stressing an ideal return to the original evangelical poverty, Segarelli espoused so wholeheartedly the eschatological perspective of Joachim that he undertook his mission precisely in 1260, the year which the abbot had indicated as the beginning of the age of the Spirit.¹⁰ It was a fellow citizen of Segarelli, Salimbene de Adam, to provide in his *Cronica* the first account of the formation of the sect, even though his report has a marked polemical and scornful tone. Presented as “an illiterate fool of humble origins”, Segarelli is always shown here in a bad light.¹¹ The partiality of Salimbene’s *Cronica* is shared by the other two coeval sources on the Apostolic Brethren, both of them dating from the first two decades of the XIV century. The first is an anonymous description of the last two years (1306-1307) of Dolcino, who had succeeded Segarelli as leader of the group in 1300 (when Segarelli was burnt at the stake), as well as of the siege of Mount Rubello.¹² Here the Apostolic Brethren had found temporary refuge from the troops of the bishop of Vercelli, Raniero Avogadri. The second source is a short treatise that is part of the *Practica inquisitionis hareticae pravitatis*, an Inquisition manual written in 1316 by Bernard Gui (Guidoni).¹³ With the aim of detailing all the doctrinal errors of the Apostolic Brethren, Gui explained Segarelli and Dolcino’s theories about the sequence of ages until the Last Day (largely inspired by Joachim of Fiore) and the fate of the Roman Church, which was not regarded by them as “the

¹⁰ On Segarelli, Dolcino and the Apostolic Brethren, see Raniero Orioli, “*Venit perfidus heresiarcha*”. *Il movimento apostolico dolciniano dal 1260 al 1307* (Roma: Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo, 1988); Corrado Mornese and Gustavo Buratti (eds.), *Fra Dolcino e gli Apostolici tra eresia, rivolte e roghi* (Roma: DeriveApprodi, 2000); Corrado Mornese, *Fra Dolcino, Gherardino Segalello e una resistenza montanara medievale. Una nuova interpretazione nel dibattito contemporaneo* (Novara: Millenia, 2000); Raniero Orioli (ed.), *Fra Dolcino. Nascita, vita e morte di un’eresia medievale* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2004); Jerry Benjamin Pierce, *Poverty, Heresy and the Apocalypse: the Order of the Apostles and Social Change in Medieval Italy. 1260-1307* (New York: Continuum, 2012).

¹¹ “*Venit quidam iuvenis natione Parmensis, de vili progenie ortus, illitteratus et laicus, idiota et stultus, cui nomen Gerardinus Segalellus*”. *Ibid.*, p. 256. Cf. the whole account, pp. 255-292.

¹² *Historia fratris Dulcini, heresiarche*, Arnaldo Segarizzi (ed.), in *Rerum italicarum scriptores. Raccolta degli storici italiani dal cinquecento al millecinquecento*, ordinata da Ludovico Antonio Muratori, nuova edizione riveduta, ampliata e corretta, con la direzione di Giosuè Carducci e Vittorio Fiorini, 34 vols., Città di Castello: Lapi (1900-1917)-Bologna: Zanichelli (1917-1975), IX/5, pp. 3-14.

¹³ Bernard Gui, *Practica inquisitionis heretice pravitatis*, C. Douais (ed.) (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1886), pp. 327-355. A critical edition of Gui’s description of the sect is published in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, IX/5, pp. 17-36.

Church of God”, but rather as “that whore who has repudiated the faith in Christ”.¹⁴ Consequently, “all the prelates of the Roman Church since the time of saint Sylvester, after they deviated from the way of life of the previous saints”, were abusers, “except for friar de Marrone, who was called pope Celestine”.¹⁵ In a letter written in 1300 to “all the believers in Christ, and especially to his followers”,¹⁶ Dolcino had prognosticated that, in three years, “all the prelates of the Church and the other clerics [...], and all the monks and nuns [...], and all the friars and sisters of the orders of Preachers and Minor and Hermit [...], as well as pope Boniface VIII [...]” would be “exterminated with the divine sword by the new emperor [Frederick of Sicily, the son of Peter III of Aragon] and his kings”. By that time, all the Christians would be in peace, and there would be a “holy pope, marvellously sent and chosen by God, and not by the cardinals, who would then be murdered with the others”.¹⁷

Having previously examined Davidico’s description of the miniature that depicted the Angelic Pope (perhaps intended as Pole’s papal coat of arm), one will immediately notice the striking identity between the above-mentioned sentence and the inscription on the upper part of the miniature, which celebrated “the Angelic Pope sent and chosen by God [*“angelicus papa a Deo missus et electus”*]”. Moreover, this correspondence does not merely amount to a lexical similarity, but is further reinforced by the clear-cut conceptual distinction between the visible hierarchy (symbolised by the cardinals) and the spiritual church, led by the holy pope, who was “sent and chosen by God”. It was this differentiation that lay at the heart of both the miniature and the interpretation provided by Priuli through the ambiguous riddle of the two popes. Once again, however, the plausibility of Davidico’s testimony might be objected by hypothesising that he knew Gui’s Inquisition manual and called some of its sections to mind when describing the frontispiece of the book on the papal prophecies and the reform of the

¹⁴ “Dogmatizaverunt [...] et dogmatizant [...] quod Ecclesia Romana quam tenent papa et cardinales et clerici et religiosi non est Ecclesia Dei, set [...] illa meretrix quae a fide Christi apostatavit de qua scribit Iohannes in *Apocalypsi*”. Gui, *Practica inquisitionis*, pp. 336-337 (p. 24 of the edition published in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*).

¹⁵ “Quod omnes praelati Romanae Ecclesiae tam maiores quam minores a tempore sancti Silvestri, postquam declinaverunt a modo vivendi priorum sanctorum, sunt praevaricatores et seductores, excepto fratre de Marrone, qui fuit papa Celestinus appellatus”. Gui, *Practica inquisitionis*, p. 337.

¹⁶ “Ad universos Christi fideles et specialiter ad suos sequaces”. Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁷ “Omnes praelati Ecclesiae et caeteri clerici a maiori usque ad minorem, et omnes monachi et monache, et religiosi et religiose, et omnes fratres et sorores ordinum Praedicatorum et Minorum et Heremitarum [...], necnon Bonifacius papa VIII [...], divino gladio exterminabuntur ab imperatore relevato et a regibus novis factis per ipsum imperatorem [...]. Tunc omnes christiani erunt positi in pace, et tunc erit unus papa sanctus a Deo missus mirabiliter et electus, et non a cardinalibus, qui tunc erunt occisi cum aliis”. Ibid., p. 333.

Church. In this way, he might have theoretically filled his story with details – such as the inscriptions on the miniature – that would evoke a well-known heresy. A simple consideration, instead, will prove this hypothesis wrong. Unlike other XIV-century Inquisition manuals such as Nicholas Eymerich's *Directorium Inquisitionis* (1376), which circulated in manuscript throughout the XV century and was printed in numerous editions since the beginning of the XVI century, Gui's *Practica inquisitionis* faded into oblivion.¹⁸ Until the second half of the XIX century, when the work was first published by the abbot Douais (1886),¹⁹ the very few scholars who knew about the *Practica* thought it was lost. It was therefore impossible for Davidico to quote from a book that was largely forgotten at that time. It must be pointed out, in any case, that the deeds and the doctrines of the Apostolic Brethren were likely to be familiar to Davidico, born in a village (Castelnovetto in the Lomellina) that is less than 100 kilometres away from the place in which the *Apostolici* had been defeated in 1307, and only 20 kilometres from Vercelli, where their leader had been tried and burnt at that stake. Until the present day, the memory of Dolcino has always been kept alive in this area, where he has been traditionally regarded as a sort of folk hero.

2.1. The First Papal Prophecies

The rebellious acts of these radical groups, which opposed the papacy and the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy on the grounds of the prophesied imminent advent of a pontiff-saviour, were not the only effects of the tensions generated both by the turbulent handover of power within the Church and by Boniface VIII's political ambitions. Indeed, this turmoil was also accompanied by the making of the first papal prophecies, which would have an enormous success for centuries to come. The prolonged instability that characterised first the period of the Avignon papacy and then the Western Schism provided fertile ground for the propagation

¹⁸ See Charles Molinier, *L'Inquisition dans le midi de la France au XIIIe et XIVe siècle. Étude sur les sources de son histoire*, thèse pour le doctorat ès-lettres, présentée à la Faculté de Paris (Toulouse: Paul Privat, 1880), pp. 225-226; cf. pp. 197-236 for Gui's *Practica*, in particular pp. 221-226 for the comparison between this work and Eymerich's *Directorium Inquisitionis*.

¹⁹ As early as 1879 Léopold Delisle wrote an article on the four known manuscripts of Gui's *Practica*: Léopold Delisle, 'Notice sur les manuscrits de Bernard Gui', *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque nationale et autres bibliothèques*, 27/2 (1879), pp. 169-452, in particular pp. 351-376.

of such prophecies, whose basic pattern definitively crystallised in the usual twofold sequence: the prediction of misfortunes and calamities, caused by the Antichrist, was thus followed by the expectation of the Angelic Pope, who would restore religious unity while reforming the Church. One of the oldest and most popular of these vaticinations was the one that has come to be known as the *Genus nequam* ("vile lineage"), which takes its name from the opening words of the initial caption.²⁰ The prophecy consists of a set of fifteen images, which purport to prognosticate future pontificates. The meaning of each illustration is both condensed in an inscription and explained in an enigmatic caption that should provides clues about the pontiff to which the picture alludes. In his pioneering 1929 article,²¹ Herbert Grundmann demonstrated the derivation of this series of images and texts from a group of prophecies attested in the XII century and allegedly attributed to the Byzantine emperor Leo VI the Wise, who had reigned from 886 to 912. Sixteen of these oracles – the ones about future Byzantine emperors and the empire itself – would later develop into the popular *Vaticinia pontificum*,²² which probably had their roots in the circle of the Spiritual Franciscans that gravitated towards Angelo Clareno and Pietro of Macerata (known as fra Liberato).²³

The popes portrayed in the first pictures of the *Genus nequam* group are singled out as the embodiment of vices and immoral acts such as nepotism (*Vaticinium* I), dissipation of tithes (II) and simony (III), which result in "confusion and errors" (IV).²⁴ The following image (V), which portrays a tonsured character holding a sickle in one hand and a rose in the other, extols the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience while heralding the destruction of the hypocritical,²⁵ whose representation is to be found in the sixth *Vaticinium*. Another evil pope, similar to the first one, appears in the following picture (VII).²⁶ This precedes the apostrophe

²⁰ See the critical edition of the *Genus nequam* prophecies: Martha H. Fleming (ed.), *The Late Medieval Pope Prophecies. The Genus nequam Group* (Tempe: Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999; henceforward *Genus nequam*), pp. 148-187.

²¹ Herbert Grundmann, 'Die Papstprophetien des Mittelalters', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, 19 (1929), pp. 77-138 (reprinted in Grundmann, Herbert, *Ausgewählte Aufsätze*, vol. XXV/2, 1977, of *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Schriften*, pp. 1-57). Cf. Robert Lerner, *On the Origins of the Earliest Latin Pope Profecies: a Reconsideration*, in *Fälschungen im Mittelalter*, vol. XXXIII/5 (1985) of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Schriften*, pp. 611-635.

²² On the oracles ascribed to the emperor Leo see Antonio Rigo, *Oracula Leonis. Tre manoscritti greco-veneziani degli oracoli attribuiti all'imperatore bizantino Leone il Saggio: Bodl. Baroc. 170, Marc. gr. VII.22, Marc. gr. VII.3* (Padova: Programma, 1988).

²³ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, p. 402.

²⁴ See *Genus nequam*, respectively pp. 148-150, 152-153, 154-156, 158-159.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165. The *Vaticinium* VI is missing from this edition, which repeats twice the seventh

(VIII) to an unnamed city that might be identified as Rome,²⁷ on the basis of the parallelism between this *Vaticinium* and the tenth, which contains the warning “woe betide you, city of seven hills”,²⁸ as well as the prediction that “there shall be unity” (“unitas erit”). The two illustrations of the city mark the transition to the second part of the series, as though they were the pillars of a gate. In fact, the tuning-point is precisely between them, for the ninth *Vaticinium* proclaims the cessation of simony.²⁹ This is the template for the last five images, which constitute the positive counterpart of the first four *Vaticinia*. As a consequence, they foretell that the poor will receive a treasure (XI), charity will abound (XII), there shall be concord (XIII), and reverence and devotion will grow (XV).³⁰ The fourteenth illustration, which bears the title “Bona occasio: viventium sacra cessabunt” [“Good opportunity: the sacred things of the living will cease”],³¹ is directly related to the preceding one in that they both depict a pope whose authority is of angelic origin. In the *Vaticinium* XIII, an angel places the papal tiara on the pontiff’s head, whereas the following picture shows a pope sitting on his throne and surrounded by two angels.

The circulation of the *Genus nequam* prophecies is attested in Italy, France and England as early as the 1310s, when they were already ascribed to Joachim of Fiore.³² This was also the case for another very similar set of fifteen vaticinations, traditionally identified as the *Ascende calve* prophecies [“rise up, you bald”]. Like the *Genus nequam*, whose structure is maintained unaltered, this group derives its name from the opening words of the first caption. The origins of the *Ascende calve* vaticinations – which were presumably conceived in Italy, within the sect of the so-called *fraticelli*³³ – go back to the first half of the XIV century. This series must have been already known in 1356, when it was mentioned in Jean de Roquetaillade’s prophetic text *Vade mecum in tribulatione*,³⁴ one of the very last works (at

Vaticinium, perhaps erroneously.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 166-167.

²⁸ “Veh tibi, civitas septem collis”. Ibid., pp. 170-171.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 168-169.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 174-175, 176-177, 178-179, 184-185.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 180-182.

³² See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 404-405.

³³ See ibid., p. 412.

³⁴ Jean de Roquetaillade (Iohannes de Rupescissa), *Vade mecum in tribulatione*, in *Appendix ad fasciculum rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum, ab Orthuino Gratia editum Coloniae A.D. MDXXXV*, opera et studio Edwardi Brown, Londini, impensis Richard Chiswell ab insigne Rosae Coronatae in Coemeterio S. Pauli, 1690, pp. 496-508. See p. 501: Roquetaillade writes that he has dealt with the theme of the “Elias mysticus” [“mystic Elijah”] in many works, among which “my commentary on the prophetic book about the supreme pontiffs,

least among those that have survived) of the French visionary and alchemist. Unlike the *Genus nequam* set, however, the *Ascende calve* prophecies are not characterised by a clearly distinguishable twofold partition, in which the first gloomy section gives way to a promising future dominated by the angelic pontiffs.³⁵ Half of the captions that accompany the illustrations curse instead the portrayed characters for their wickedness and depravity (*Vaticinia* I, II, III, V, VI, VIII, IX),³⁶ sometimes suggesting a connection with astrological events (II). Even when righteous popes are portrayed, the captions explain that they will encounter difficulties. Thus, in the fourth *Vaticinium*, a fox poses a danger to the knelt pontiff, whose power will be “devoured” by the “foxy voice”, while “he will die troubled and in despair”.³⁷ The pope depicted in the tenth image “will die poor” and “the lamb will still be wounded”.³⁸ The rise of his successor (XI), who is defined as “lover of the crucifix” and of peace, as well as “a brilliant mind”, will not bring the desired results, for “he will not achieve what he thinks”.³⁹ The following pope too (XII), despite his best intentions, will eventually be compliant,⁴⁰ whereas the thirteenth *Vaticinium* bears the only unequivocally positive message of the series: the pontiff represented here is “the one who will open the book written by the finger of the living God”.⁴¹ This is only ephemeral bliss before the final ruin, the prodromes of which start to manifest themselves in the fourteenth *Vaticinium* (showing a pope assaulted by a soldier that brandishes a sword).⁴² A dragon with a human face – the “cruel beast that will consume the universe”⁴³ – marks the hopeless end of the *Ascende calve* series.

The popularity of these papal prophecies stimulated forthwith the proliferation of successful imitations such as the *Liber de flore*, which dates back to the first decade of the

which begins with *Ascende calve*” (“in commentario meo libri prophetici de summis pontificibus, qui incipit *Ascende calve*”).

³⁵ The numerous versions of the *Ascende calve* prophecies that have survived are always juxtaposed with the *Genus nequam* group. For the following references to the *Ascende calve* group, I will use the 1515 edition: *Prophetia dello abbate Joachino circa li pontifici et R[omana] C[hiesa]* (Bologna: per magistro Hieronymo Benedicti, 1515), pp. B[1r]-[C4r].

³⁶ Ibid., pp. B[1r], [B1v], B2[r], [B3r], [B3v], [B4v], C[1r].

³⁷ “La voce gemina, et vulpina devorà il suo principato; et tribulato et sconsolato morirà”. Ibid., p. [B2v]. In some editions, this *Vaticinium* figures as the fifth of the series.

³⁸ “Povero morirà”. “Remanerà l’agnello gravemente impiagato”. Ibid., p. [C1v].

³⁹ “Alto ascenderà, dalla doppia benedizione prevenuto, l’amatore d’il crucifixo, il cultore della pace, alto de ingegno. Ma quello che pensa non adimpirà”. Ibid., p. C2[r].

⁴⁰ “Povero intrando, le cose alte considerando, da le infime condescendendo”. Ibid., p. [C2v].

⁴¹ “Questo solo aprirà il libro scripto con il dicto de Dio vivo”. Ibid., p. [C3r].

⁴² See ibid., p. [C3v].

⁴³ “Fera crudele che l’universo consumi”. Ibid., p. [C4r].

XIV century. Inspired by the *Genus nequam* vaticinations, this series does not actually include any illustration and reveals a more evident connection with the contemporary political situation. As a result, the characterisation of the four angelic popes that constitute the culmination of this series is more historically situated, betraying a pronounced tilt towards the French monarchy.⁴⁴ The first of these pontiffs, a “poor and naked” monk crowned by an angel, will both give up the Church’s temporal power and ally himself with a “king of Pepin’s descent”, in order to conquer Jerusalem. He will be followed by a French pope, who will eliminate abuses in Germany, and then by an Italian Franciscan. The last Angelic Pope, a charismatic preacher from Gascony, will rule until the coming of the Antichrist.⁴⁵

This political reading of the theme of the *pastor angelicus* was taken up and further developed by Jean de Roquetaillade (Iohannes de Rupescissa), who contributed to propagating the idea that the role played by the French monarchy would be functional to the eschatological mission of the Angelic Pope.⁴⁶ One of Roquetaillade’s most influential works in this respect was his long commentary on the *Oraculum Cyrilli*, a prophetic text that dealt with the fate of the Church. Supposedly dictated by an angel to saint Cyril of Constantinople on Mount Carmel, the *Oraculum Cyrilli* had more likely originated within the Spiritual Franciscan circles in the late XIII century.⁴⁷ Roquetaillade’s commentary, which was completed in 1349, goes as far as designating the ecclesiastical hierarchy as the Church of Antichrist. The duality between this pseudo-Church and the actual spiritual Church is reflected in the coexistence of two popes: on the one hand an illegitimately elected pontiff, on the other the *angelicus pastor*, who will be a reformer, as well as a “*corrector et reparator*”.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 403-404.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 404.

⁴⁶ On Jean de Roquetaillade, see the classic study of Jeanne Bignami-Odier, *Études sur Jean de Roquetaillade* (Paris: Vrin, 1952). For Roquetaillade’s prophetism, see the series of articles published in the issue 102/2 (1990) of the *Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome, Moyen-Age, Temps modernes*, in particular: Robert Lerner, ‘Millénarisme littéral et vocation des Juifs chez Jean de Roquetaillade ou la rencontre de l’imaginaire’, pp. 311-315; Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, ‘Cola di Rienzo et Jean de Roquetaillade ou la rencontre de l’imaginaire’, pp. 381-389; Jean-Pierre Torrell, ‘La conception de la prophétie chez Jean de Roquetaillade’, pp. 557-576. See also Leah DeVun, *Prophecy, Alchemy, and the End of Time. John of Rupescissa in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), in particular pp. 32-51.

⁴⁷ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 57-58. The *Oraculum Cyrilli* is published as *Oraculum angelicum Cyrilli cum expositione Ioachimi abbatis Florentis*, Paul Piur (ed.), in *Vom Mittelalter zur Reformation: Forschungen zur Geschichte der deutschen Bildung*, 11 vols., Konrad Burdach (ed.) (Berlin: Weidmann, 1913-1934), II/4, pp. 223-343.

⁴⁸ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 321, 416-417. Cf. Bignami-Odier, *Études sur Jean de Roquetaillade*, pp. 53-109.

Sometimes the Angelic Pope is assimilated to the dove of the holy spirit, a significant and recurrent symbol in Joachim of Fiore's writings, where it stands for the spiritual people of the third age.⁴⁹ In the same way, it must also be remembered that the portrait of Pole as Angelic Pope, in the miniature described by Davidico, was illuminated by a golden ray that emanated from a dove. The works of Jean de Roquetaillade – namely his commentary on the *Oraculum Cyrilli*, but also his *Liber secretorum eventuum* (1349) and the *Liber ostensor* (written in 1356, during his detention in Avignon) – were a major source of inspiration for a mysterious XIV-century hermit, who called himself by the name of Telesphorus of Cosenza. Whether or not this Calabrian hermit actually existed, he was to become known as the author of a short treatise about the schism and the tribulations in the Church. Compiled in the 1380s, this work is an interpretation of the *Oraculum Cyrilli* (which owes much of its success to this) as well as a collection of other prophecies, extracted from Joachimist or pseudo-Joachimist books and updated according to the contemporary events.⁵⁰

2.2. Imitations, Reinterpretations, Manipulations

However high the popularity of Telesphorus's work, even as late as the XVI century, it never reached the level of popularity enjoyed by the papal *Vaticinia*. Both in the manuscript versions of the XV century and in the printed copies of the XVI century, the two series were almost always combined under the title *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, with the later set – the *Ascende calve* – preceding the *Genus nequam* prophecies.⁵¹ By virtue of this juxtaposition, the typical pattern of the *Genus nequam*, based on the progression from the turpitude of the first pontiffs to the modesty and integrity of the angelic popes, is further amplified in the new

⁴⁹ See above, p. 141.

⁵⁰ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 57-58, 324, 328.

⁵¹ Among the numerous manuscript copies that combine the two series of *Vaticinia*, see for example Kremsmünster, Stiftsbibliothek, *Vaticinia Pontificum*, CC Cim. 6 (Lyon: Bibliothèque municipale), *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, MS.189 (Bologna: Biblioteca dell'Archiginnasio), *Vaticinia Pontificum, sive Prophetiae Abbatis Joachini*, A.2848. All of these manuscript date from the first half of the XV century. The earliest printed copy is the aforementioned *Prophetia dello abbate Joachino circa li pontifici* (Bologna, 1515), while the most successful was certainly *Vaticinia, sive prophetiae abbatis Ioachimi et Anselmi episcopi Marsicani, cum praefatione at adnotationibus Paschalini Regiselmi, Venetiis, apud Hyeronimum Porrum, 1589* (henceforward *Vaticinia*, ed. Regiselman).

format. This arrangement plays in fact on the contrast between the apocalyptic conclusion of the *Ascende calve* and the redemptive value of the last popes, who gain more prominence within an eschatological perspective. It is therefore easy to identify the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* as one of the main sources for the *Vita angelici papae*, the prophecy in verse that contrasted the vices of the past pontiffs with the virtues of Pole, who was expected to be the long-awaited Angelic Pope. The decisive factor for the enormous and enduring success enjoyed by the *Vaticinia* was the very indeterminacy of their illustrations and captions. Unlike other prophecies such as the one by Telesphorus and the *Liber de flore*, which allowed little room for alternative readings, the obscurity of the *Vaticinia* opened up infinite possibilities of reinterpretation, as attested by the frequent annotations on the manuscript copies.

During the XVI century, those who published these prophecies usually gave their own gloss on them. In this way, the editions of the *Vaticinia* often became part of wider propaganda campaigns, as was the case, for instance, with a Protestant pamphlet published in 1527.⁵² This work was the result of a collective project that saw the collaboration of the theologian and scientist Andreas Osiander, who wrote the preface and the explanation of each picture (thus dismissing the traditional captions), the Meistersinger Hans Sachs, author of the verses that accompanied each picture, and the woodcut designer Erhard Schön, who drew the illustrations, introducing some modifications.⁵³ The aim of the pamphlet was not to find out the identity of the portrayed popes, but rather to show the moral decay of the papacy and the ineluctable extinction of this institution, for “God himself will appoint other people to the Apostle’s post”.⁵⁴ This is the meaning Osiander attributes to the representation of the angel that places a papal tiara on the pontiff’s head (XXVIII *Vaticinium*; thirteenth of the *Genus nequam* series). Furthermore, the image of the monk holding a sickle and a rose – originally

⁵² *Ein wunderliche Weissagung von dem Babstumb, wie es yhm bis an das Ende der Welt gehen soll, ynn Figuren odder Gemelde begriffen, gefunden zu Nurmberg ym Cartheuser Kloster, und ist sehr alt, ein Vorred Andreas Osianders, mit gutter verstendlicher Auslegung durch gelerte Leut verklert. Wilche Hans Sachs in Deudsche reymen gefasset und darzu gesetzt hat, [Wittenberg], 1527.*

⁵³ See David Heffner, ‘Regnum vs. Sacerdotium in a Reformation Pamphlet’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 20 (1989), pp. 617-630 (617, 619). On this pamphlet, see also Roland Herbert Bainton, ‘The Joachimite Prophecy: Osiander and Sachs’, in Roland H. Bainton (ed.), *Studies on the Reformation* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), pp. 62-66.

⁵⁴ “So wird Got von Hymel selbs ander Leut ynn das Apostel Ampt einsetzen”. *Ein wunderliche Weissagung*, p. [E2v].

regarded as the prediction of Celestine V's pontificate⁵⁵ – is described in this pamphlet as the prefiguration of Luther,⁵⁶ whose seal contained a cross within a heart and a rose.⁵⁷

Only three years later, in 1530, a new edition of the *Vaticinia* was published in Nuremberg by Paracelsus, who echoed similar criticism of the papacy in his comments on the prophetic pictures.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, Paracelsus's reading of the papal vaticinations was not informed by the same polemical motives that had animated Osiander. The interpretation offered by the Protestant theologian obviously obliterates the traditional connection between the last images of the series and the myth of the Angelic Pope. The righteous pontiffs at the end of the *Vaticinia* are therefore depicted as the metaphorical representation of the condition peculiar to the apostles.⁵⁹ By contrast, Paracelsus's observations on the last *Vaticinia* go back to the radical conceptions of the theme of the *pastor angelicus*. The recurrent motif is, in this case, the overlap between the worldly Church and the *Ecclesia spiritualis*, the latter of which is destined to emerge as the truly legitimate one. It is not surprising, therefore, to find again in this pamphlet the same tenets that, according to Lorenzo Davidico, were inscribed on the frontispiece of the book on the Angelic Pope and the ecclesiastical reform (not to mention the similar convictions which Bernard Gui attributed to the Dolcinists). In Paracelsus's opinion, the image of the pontiff crowned by an angel (XXVIII) suggested that "the pope must not be crowned by men but rather by God through his angel". He went even further and inferred that "the popes thus far crowned by men are of the tree [descent] which was cursed by God".⁶⁰ The Angelic Pope, portrayed in the twenty-ninth *Vaticinium* with two angels by his sides, will be put instead in his position and receive his power "from God, not from men", and his authority

⁵⁵ In the *Genus nequam* set, this image was the fifth of the series, which was originally believed to start from Nicholas III (Orsini, who reigned between 1277 and 1280).

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. [C4v].

⁵⁷ Luther described his seal in a letter written on 8 July 1530 to Lazarus Spengler. Given the meaning of the seal, Luther thought that his emblem could be regarded as "ein Merkzeichen meiner Theologie". *Luthers Werke*, WA, *Briefwechsel*, V, p. 445; cf. p. 444.

⁵⁸ The following quotations come from the 1570 edition of this book: Paracelsus, *Expositio vera harum imaginum olim Nurembergae repertarum ex fundatissimo verae magiae vaticinio deducta*, [Basel], 1570.

⁵⁹ See the explanation of the twenty-eighth picture: "Die Kron bedeut alle Tugend und Gabe des heiligen Geistes, die zum Apostel Ampt gehören, wie sie Petrus und Paulus gehabt haben". *Ein wunderliche Weissagung*, p. [E2v]. Cf. pp. E3[r]-[E3v].

⁶⁰ "Ab ista pictura colligitur papam non ab hominibus sed a Deo per angelum suum coronari debere. Sequitur inde papas hactenus ab hominibus coronatos ex arbore fore cui Deo maledixit". Paracelsus, *Expositio vera harum imaginum*, p. 44r; cf. p. 44v.

“will not be of human nature but rather of angelic kind”.⁶¹ “Under this power – concluded Paracelsus in his final comment – the whole flock will be led back to one sheepfold”.⁶²

3.1. “Fiet unum ovile, et unus pastor”: *the Imperial Way to Universality*

The restatement of one of the leitmotifs most frequently related to the myth of the Angelic Pope – the evangelical motto *unum ovile, et unus pastor* – assumes a peculiar significance in light of Paracelsus’s interpretation of the twenty-third picture, which in his eyes showed the Sack of Rome.⁶³ In the aftermath of this event, the remarks of Paracelsus betray his keen awareness of the imperial propaganda campaign that was launched soon after the Sack, with the publication of Alfonso de Valdés’s *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* [*Dialogue of the Things that Occurred in Rome*, 1527]. In this work, also known as *Dialogue of Lactancio and an archdeacon*, the emperor’s secretary for the Latin correspondence aimed to give a justification for the captivity of the pope and the devastation of Rome by suggesting a providential interpretation of the events, which he described as the divine punishment for the sins of the city and, in particular, of the pope and the clergy.⁶⁴ This was not the first time that Valdés accused the pope (Clement VII) of failing to fulfil his spiritual and moral duties: an even more bitter denunciation of the pontiff’s negligence had already been voiced in some letters which Valdés had drafted, in close collaboration with the Grand Chancellor Mercurino of Gattinara, during the diplomatic crisis that followed Charles’s victory at Pavia (1525). On the eve of the invasion of Rome, these polemical missives had been published, together with other documents, with the title *Pro divo Carolo [...]*

⁶¹ “Significatur hic papam istum a Deo, non ab hominibus, sedem et suam potestatem habiturum, et ista non humano sed angelico modo fieri”. Ibid., p. 45v.

⁶² “Sub tali potestate reducentur oves omnes in unum ovile”. Ibid., p. 46v.

⁶³ “Hac figura designatur expugnatio urbis Romae sub Carolo Quinto per Germanos facta”. Ibid., p. 38r.

⁶⁴ The two main purposes of this work are unequivocally declared, in the first pages, by the character of Lactancio, who was significantly named after the early Christian author and adviser of the emperor Constantine: “Lo primero que haré será mostráros cómo el emperador ninguna culpa tiene en lo que en Roma se ha hecho. I lo segundo, cómo todo lo que ha acaezido, ha sido por manifesto juizio de Dios, para castigar aquella ciudad, donde, con grande ignominia de la relijión cristiana, reinaban todos los vizios que la malizia de los hombres podia inventar; i con quel castigo, despertar el pueblo cristiano, para que remediados los males que padeze, abramos los ojos i vivamos como cristianos”. *Dos dialogos*, p. 338.

apologetici libri duo [Two Apologetic Books for the Sacred Emperor Charles].⁶⁵ This fierce attack on the pope went hand in hand with the revival of the old-standing tradition that regarded the emperor as custodian of what Marcel Bataillon called “a complex dream of Spanish hegemony, Christian unity and general reform”.⁶⁶ Indeed, the letters composed by Valdés and Gattinara on behalf of Charles V also exhorted the pope to summon a “general council”, which the emperor strongly supported in the conviction that it would serve the cause of the “well-being, protection and growth of the *Respublica Christiana*”.⁶⁷

Admittedly, the resurgent ideal of a Spanish empire that was at the same time universal, providential and pastoral⁶⁸ went back further in time, namely to the period of the Catholic Monarchs. While Castile and Aragon were gaining increasing influence in Europe, the fall of the last Muslim kingdom in the Iberian peninsula and the discovery of a new world, which offered previously unsuspected prospects for the expansion of Christianity, contributed to creating a new form of political messianism centred upon the Spanish dual monarchy. Thus, in the first decade of the XVI century, cardinal Cisneros had imagined king Ferdinand leading a European coalition to crush “the Mahometan sect” and reunite Christendom in one sheepfold, under one shepherd (*unum ovile, et unus pastor*).⁶⁹ Subsequently, the enormous extent of the dominions which Charles V amassed through multiple inheritance added new

⁶⁵ *Pro divo Carolo eius nominis quinto Romanorum imperatore invictissimo, pio, felice, semper augusto, patre patriae, in satisfactionem quidem sine talione eorum quae in illum scripta, ac pleraque etiam in vulgum edita fuere, apologetici libri duo nuper ex Hispaniis allati cum aliis nonnullis, quorum catalogos ante cuiusque exordium reperies*, [Mainz: Joannes Schoeffer, 1527]. The two books includes two missives of pope Clement VII to Charles V and the responses of the emperor; one letter of Charles to the College of Cardinals and one to the prince-electors of the Holy Roman Empire; an apology of the Treaty of Madrid (between Charles V and Francis I) and other documents of the French king. On the propaganda campaign and the publication of *Pro divo Carolo*, see John M. Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor. A Study of the Imperial Chancellery Under Gattinara* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 86-113.

⁶⁶ “Motifs politiques et motifs religieux s’associent alors dans un rêve complexe d’hégémonie espagnole, d’unité chrétienne et de réforme générale”. Marcel Bataillon, *Érasme et l’Espagne*, Préface de Jean-Claude Margolin (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1998; reprint de la thèse de 1937), p. 243.

⁶⁷ “Deque Lutheranorum aliorumque haeticorum sectis et erroribus comprimendis, corrigendis atque sedandis et, si licuerit, ad gremium Ecclesiae reducendis, de illis quoque omnibus quae Romanae Ecclesiae totiusque Christianae Reipublicae statum, salutem, conservationem et incrementum concernere possunt tractetur conveniatur [...]. Supplicantes propterea eidem Vestrae Sanctitati, illamque in Domino hortantes, quatenus pro suo pastoralis officio, proque cura et sollicitudine gregis sibi commissi, dignetur ipsum sacrum generale concilium indicere et convocare in loco tuto et congruo, cum debita termini praefixione” *Pro divo Carolo*, p. [Liiv]. The appeal for a council was restated in a much more concise letter to the Sacred College of cardinals (ibid., pp. Miii[r]-Nii[r]), to whom the emperor’s advisers addressed new complaints against the pontiff.

⁶⁸ See John M. Headley, ‘Rhetoric and Reality: Messianic, Humanist, and Civilian Themes in the Imperial Ethos of Gattinara’, in *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 241-269 (256).

⁶⁹ See Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, pp. 51-52.

impetus to the dream of a universal Christian empire. In the first memorandum (*consulta*) written by Mercurino of Gattinara shortly after the election of Charles V as emperor, the Grand Chancellor reminded the sovereign that God had raised him “above all the kings and princes of Christendom to a power such as no sovereign has enjoyed since the division of the empire, which was realised in the person of Charlemagne your predecessor”. The ultimate aim of his election was therefore “the uniting of all Christendom under a single shepherd”.⁷⁰ The victory of Pavia provided Alfonso de Valdés too with the occasion to celebrate Charles’s providential mission, which consisted “not only in defending Christendom and resisting the power of the Turks”, but also in driving both the Turks themselves and the Moors “out of their lands”. The ideal preservation and augmentation of the heritage of the Latin Empire and the “holy House of Jerusalem” would eventually lead to the fulfilment of the numerous prophecies about Charles’s unique destiny: under his reign, in fact, the Redeemer’s promise – “*Fiet unum ovile et unus pastor*” – would definitively come true.⁷¹

For a man like Valdés, who belonged to a family of *conversos*, the reference to this evangelical refrain did not allude merely to the dream of concord and peace traditionally associated with the passage from John’s gospel, but it also evoked an egalitarian ideal that had

⁷⁰ “*Historia vitae et gestorum per dominum magnum cancellarium*” (Mercurino Arborio di Gattinara), *con note, aggiunte e documenti*, Carlo Bornate (ed.), «Miscellanea di storia italiana», terza serie, tomo XVIII, 1915, p. 405. On this memorandum, see Frances A. Yates, *Astraea. The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London-Boston (Massachusetts, USA): Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 1-28 (especially p. 26); John M. Headley, *The Emperor and His Chancellor: Disputes over Empire, Administration and Pope (1519-1529)*, in *Carlos V y la quiebra del humanismo político en Europa (1530-1558). Congreso internacional, Madrid, 3-6 de julio de 2000*, coordinador general del congreso José Martínez Millán, 4 vols. (Madrid: Sociedad Estatal para la conmemoración de los centenarios de Felipe II y Carlos V, 2001), I, pp. 21-35 (23). Cf. Gattinara’s responsive oration (*oratio responsiva*), pronounced on 30 November 1519 before the legates of the prince-electors. The Latin text of this oration is published – with French translation – by Laurent Gerbier, ‘Les raisons de l’empire et la diversité des temps. Présentation, traduction et commentaire de la responsive oratio de Mercurino Gattinara prononcée devant la légation des princes-électeurs le 30 novembre 1519’, *Erytheis*, 3 (2008), pp. 94-115; see in particular pp. 99-100 (French: 102-103) for the reference to the motto *unum ovile, et unus pastor*.

⁷¹ “Paresce que Dios milagrosamente a dado esta vitoria al emperador para que pueda no solamente defender la Cristiandad y resistir a la potencia del Turco si ossare acometerla, mas asosegadas estas guerras ceviles (que assí se deven llamar, pues son entre cristianos), yr a buscar los turcos y moros en sus tierras, y ensalzando nuestra sancta fé católica, como sus passados hizieron, cobrar el imperio de Costantinopla et la casa sancta de Jerusalem, que por nuestros pecados tiene ocupada, para que – como de muchos está profetizado – debaxo deste cristianissimo príncipe, todo el mundo reciba nuestra sancta fé católica y se cumplan las palabras de nuestro redemptor: «*Fiet unum ovile et unus pastor*»” (my italics). This passage was part of Valdés’s report on the battle of Pavia. This and other reports were published as *Relación de las nuevas de Italia*. The Gothic edition is reproduced in Fermín Caballero, *Alonso y Juan de Valdés* (Madrid: Oficina tipográfica del Hospicio, 1875), p. 503 (page not numbered). On the above-mentioned passage from Valdés’s report, see Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, pp. 226-228.

found expression among the Spanish *conversos*.⁷² Within these social circles, which Alfonso and his brother knew very well, the motto “one sheepfold, and one shepherd” had often been regarded as the prediction of a time when “we all [...] have to be equal”.⁷³ All the “distinctions of rank and lineage” would then disappear – had proclaimed the *converso* Francisco Álvarez de Toledo before king Ferdinand of Aragon on 15 September 1505 –, “because we all belong to one faith and one Church and one religion”.⁷⁴ As these examples clearly show, the omnipresent watchword exerted, in its various forms and interpretations, an immense fascination at all levels of society, in so far as it epitomised a shared hope for religious unity under the political aegis of the Spanish emperor. “In his time – wrote Ludovico Ariosto in the *Orlando furioso* – Christ’s scattered sheep / Should be one flock, beneath one Shepherd’s keep”.⁷⁵ Similarly, the Spanish poet Hernando de Acuña celebrated the imminent fulfilment of the old dream, which he condensed in the formula “one monarch, and one empire, and one sword”. His famous sonnet in praise of Charles V expressed therefore the absolute certainty that “now there approaches, sire, or has already come / the glorious age for which Heaven portends / one flock, and one sole shepherd on this earth, / which happily for your own time’s reserved”.⁷⁶

⁷² See Pastore, *Una herejía española*, pp. 252-254.

⁷³ “Le avía oydo dezir en el dicho tiempo, fablando de las cosas de la Yglesia, que avía de venir una reformation y una luz para alumbrar a todos [...]. Aquí todos andamos ciegos, y tiempo a de venir que todos los clerigos hemos de ser yguales. Y quando dezía que avía de venir otra luz nueva, alegava una authoridad que dize yter [...] *unus pastor erit*”. Thus did a witness relate what he had heard from the Toletan priest Pero López de Soria (who was a *converso* as well). The witness, the Frenchman Giraldo, was a chaplain in the church of San Pedro de las Ventas. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 150.

⁷⁴ “Syn distençión de personas ni linajes, pues todos somos de una fee e de una Yglesia y de una religión”. *Ibid.*, p. 121. For the context in which Francisco Álvarez, who was a canon in the cathedral of Toledo, delivered his speech, see pp. 119-120.

⁷⁵ “Per questi merti la Bontà suprema [...] / vuol che sotto a questo imperatore / solo un ovile sia, solo un pastore”. Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*. The English translation of these verses comes from *The Orlando Furioso, translated into English verse from the Italian of Ludovico Ariosto*, with notes by William Stewart Rose, 8 vols. (London: John Murray, 1823-1831), III, p. 113.

⁷⁶ “Ya se acerca, Señor, o es ya llegada / La edad gloriosa en que promete el cielo / Una grey, y un pastor solo en el suelo / Por suerte a vuestros tiempo reservada: / Ya tan alto principio en tal jornada / Os muestra el fin de vuestro santo celo, / Y anuncia al mundo para más consuelo / Un Monarca, un Imperio y una Espada”. Hernando de Acuña, *Varias poesías*, segunda edición (Madrid: en la imprenta de Sancha, 1804; I edition: Salamanca, 1591), p. 214 (sonnet *Al Rey nuestro Señor*).

3.2. *Joachim's Fascinating Images*

As a leading exponent of the pro-Habsburg party within the Roman curia, Reginald Pole was not immune from the influence of the imperial ideal, which actually constituted the necessary political complement of his lifelong aspirations to religious unity. The role of the emperor as guarantor of the integrity and peace of Christendom was all the more important in a period characterised by the weakness of the papacy, which became dramatically evident on the occasion of the Sack of Rome. Yet, the value attached to the imperial ideal of universality was not in contradiction with the eschatological belief in the advent of a pontiff-saviour, not least because the crisis of the Church encouraged a sharper conceptual distinction (as in Pole's case) between a delegitimised ecclesiastical hierarchy and an idealised *Ecclesia spiritualis*. The attainment of imperial unity, in fact, would create the indispensable conditions for the religious renewal carried out by the *pastor angelicus*, and under this "one shepherd" the complete reunification of the Christian flock in one sheepfold would be finally accomplished. By the time the 21-year-old Pole went to Italy for the first time, in order to carry on the studies he had undertaken at Magdalen College in Oxford, the new possibilities offered by the press had contributed to propagating further the eschatological prospect of a thorough religious unity under the aegis of an angelic pope-reformer. This expectation – summed up in the slogan *unum ovile, et unus pastor* – had consequently become commonplace in XVI century, when it was continuously reiterated both in written and in graphic form. The latter means of expression, in particular, played a major role in the spread of this ideal, whose popularity actually depended in large measure on its frequent association with the illustrated papal prophecies traditionally ascribed to Joachim of Fiore.⁷⁷

As a matter of fact, the Calabrian abbot always had a high propensity to render his convictions by means of symbols and vivid images, as he did in the emblematic *Liber figurarum* [*Book of Figures*], a series of 23 drawings that aimed to provide a visual

⁷⁷ It is no coincidence that, following the publication of his successful edition of the *Vaticinia de summis pontifibus*, Paracelsus decided to compose a second series of illustrated prophecies. Based on the same pattern of the *Vaticinia*, this work consisted of 32 images (usually depicting landscapes and symbolic objects) accompanied by cryptic captions. See *Prognosticatio eximii doctoris Theophrasti Paracelsi, ad illustrissimum ac potentissimum principem Ferdinandum Romanorum Regem semper augustum atque archiducum Austriae conscripta*, anno 1536 (without place of publication).

compendium of his theology.⁷⁸ Mentioned by Salimbene de Adam in his *Cronica*,⁷⁹ the *Liber figurarum* was subsequently forgotten (or assumed to be lost) until the 1930s, when Leone Tondelli discovered one of the three currently known manuscripts. What was not forgotten, instead, was Joachim's inclination to communicate intriguing prophetic visions that possessed a visual impact. The memory of his unique ability lay perhaps at the root of the widespread belief that he had had a hand in the making of the celebrated mosaics in the Venetian basilica of St. Mark. Here, according to the tradition, Joachim had translated some of his prophecies into images of animals, saints or apocalyptic scenes. This legend had originated in the XIV century among the mendicant orders: in the late 1380s, the Franciscan Bartolomeo of Rinonico claimed that Joachim had foretold the coming of saint Francis "by having him depicted in the church of St. Mark in Venice".⁸⁰ Later on, a similar claim was advanced by the Dominicans, who identified the figure next to the supposed saint Francis as the prophetic portrait of their founder.⁸¹

Other legends and prophetic interpretations of the mosaics in St. Mark continued to pile up to such an extent that the interior decoration of the basilica had become, by the beginning of the XVI century, a real tourist attraction.⁸² In 1509, the chronicler and poet Jean Lemaire de Belges reported that he had heard a prophecy (obviously attributed to Joachim) about the decline of Venice, which was symbolised by two lions depicted on the floor of the basilica.⁸³

⁷⁸ Leone Tondelli, Marjorie Reeves, and Beatrice Hirsch-Reich (eds.), *Il libro delle figure dell'abate Gioachino da Fiore*, 2 vols. (Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale, 1953; I edition: 1540).

⁷⁹ See *Cronica fratris Salimbene*, p. 293.

⁸⁰ "Non solum abbas Ioachim beatum Franciscum praenuntiavit venturum verbo, sed etiam opere, quia eum depingi fecit in ecclesia sancti Marci de Venetiis super ostium sacristiae cum stigmatibus, sicut cernentibus hodierna die clarere potest, et hoc opere mosaico". Bartolomeo of Rinonico (Pisanus), *De conformitate vitae beati Francisci ad vitam Domini Iesu*, in *Analecta franciscana*, in *Analecta Franciscana, sive chronica aliaque varia documenta ad historiam fratrum minorum spectantia*, edita a patribus collegii S. Bonaventurae, IV (liber I), 1906 – V (libri II-III), 1912, IV, p. 56. Two centuries later, the Franciscan theologian Pietro Ridolfi of Tossignano repeated the same claim in his *Historiarum seraphicae religionis libri tres, seriem temporum continentes, quibus brevi explicantur fundamenta universique ordinis amplificatio, gradus et instituta, nec non viri scientia, virtutibus et fama praeclari*, Venetiis, apud Franciscum de Francis Senensem, 1586, p. 4v.

⁸¹ On the origins of this legend, see Ottavia Niccoli, "Prophetie di musaicho". Figure e scritture gioachimite nella Venezia del Cinquecento', in Antonio Rotondò (ed.), *Forme e destinazione del messaggio religioso. Aspetti della propaganda religiosa nel Cinquecento* (Firenze: Olschki, 1991), pp. 197-227 (201-202); Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, 96-97.

⁸² On the popularity of St. Mark's mosaics, as well as on their interpretations, during the XVI century, see Niccoli, "Prophetie di musaicho", pp. 203-207.

⁸³ See Jean Lemaire de Belges, 'Le traité nommé La Légende des Vénitiens, ou leur chronique abrégée', in Jean Lemaire de Belges, *Oeuvres*, 4 vols., Jean Auguste Stecher (ed.) (Louvain: imprimerie de J. Lefever, 1882-1891), III, pp. 361-409 (362-363). In the same year, Marin Sanudo mentioned the mosaics of St. Mark in his *Diaries*. See *I diarii di Marino Sanuto*, 58 vols. (Venice: 1879-1903), VIII, col. 326.

The alleged figures of saint Francis and saint Dominic, however, remained the most popular attraction. The Dominican theologian Leandro Alberti mentioned them in his short biography of Joachim, which opened the first printed edition of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* (1515).⁸⁴ Far from questioning Joachim's authorship, which was still generally accepted in the second half of the century, the Procuratoria of St. Mark's basilica ordered that no inscription or figure was to be removed or changed (as was customary among the mosaicists that worked there) without first taking note. The widespread interest in these figures survived intact until the late XVI century, when Francesco Sansovino, son of the famous architect Iacopo, referred to them in his encyclopaedic work on the city of Venice, published in 1581. A new edition of this book appeared in 1604 with the supplementary observations of the canon Giovanni Stringa. In Stringa's opinion, any foreigner who had heard about Joachim's mosaics would never fail "to go on purpose into this church to see them".⁸⁵ In the absolute certainty that "the inventor of these figures was that venerable man called the abbot Giovanni Gioachino", Stringa described in detail the pokey cell – "in the right corner of the façade of the church" – where Joachim had "formed and drawn, with his own hands, the above-mentioned figures, in the way they can be seen depicted here".⁸⁶

⁸⁴ "Anchora se dice che dal, divino spirito tocato, fabricandosi il tempio del divo Marco nella egregia et eccellente città de Venetia [...], fece formare et effingere li simulachri del divo Dominico et Francesco con emblemate et tesserule de opere vermiculato, volgarmente dicto in mosaceo". *Prophetia dello abbate Joachino*, p. [A3v].

⁸⁵ "Né è da trapassare con silentio la fama che hanno queste figure specialmente presso i forestieri per la predetta ragione: imperoché non viene alcuno a Venetia il quale, essendo all'orecchi sue una tal cosa pervenuta, non venga a posta in questa chiesa per vederle". *Venetia città nobilissima, et singolare; descritta già in XIII libri da M. Francesco Sansovino, et hora con diligenza corretta, emendata, e più d'un terzo di cose nuove ampliata dal M. R. D. Giovanni Stringa*, in Venetia, presso Altobello Salicato, 1604, p. 58v.

⁸⁶ "Non è dubbio alcuno che l'inventore di esse figure non sia stato quel venerabile huomo chiamato l'abbate Giovanni Gioachino il quale, essendo venuto a Venetia pochi anni dopo che principio si diede a lavorar in questa chiesa di mosaico, et ottenuto un luogo in questa chiesa molto angusto et rimoto, che tuttavia si mostra per sua habitatione, e nel quale io con molta fatica a capo chino et a ginocchi piegati sono una volta entrato, il quale è quello che, nel cantone destro della facciata della chiesa, immediate sotto le colonnelle del corridore è posto; essendo, dico, venuto a Venetia et habitando in detto luogo, con molta astinenza et con fama di santità di vita, formò quivi e disegnò con le proprie mani le perdette [*sic*] figure nel modo come quivi dipinte si veggono". *Ibid.*, p. 58r.

3.3. *Prophetic Fervour and Mysteries in Venice*

Between 1521 and 1526, when he was studying at Padua, Pole must have certainly been among the foreigners who visited St. Mark's basilica to admire the mosaics attributed to Joachim of Fiore. As was pointed out earlier, he was particularly susceptible to the eschatological perspective of the prophetic speculations, which he and many of his contemporaries often regarded as the interpretative key to a present characterised by conflicts and uncertainties. In the light of his later identification with the Angelic Pope, one can imagine that, among the numerous figures on the floor and the walls of St. Mark, there was one in particular that captured his interest. The existence of this picture, which is no longer visible, is attested once again by Giovanni Stringa. In his supplement to Francesco Sansovino's book, he referred to two figures that had been drawn by Joachim and that were similar to the pictures of saint Francis and saint Dominic, "although wearing different clothes". These figures were

under another arch [...], close to the one under which there is that pious marble statue of the Madonna, which stands next to the pillar opposite the one of the altar of san Giacomo [...]. It is not possible to know whether these too have come to this world. One of them, dressed in papal clothes, is believed to be the last supreme pontiff, under whom *Fiet* – as the gospel says – *unum ovile, et unus pastor*.⁸⁷

Such a vivid representation of the traditional link between the expectation of the Angelic Pope and the hopes for religious unity must have had a profound impact on Pole, whose subsequent work would often emphasise the inseparability of the integrity of the Church and its need for reform. Undoubtedly, however, he was not the only one to be fascinated with the evocative mosaics in St. Mark. Half a century later, a group of artisans still gathered in St. Mark to listen to a sermon about the prophetic pictures ascribed to Joachim. These mosaics

⁸⁷ "Due altre figure simili senza il lor nome, ma di habito differenti, fece egli parimente sotto un altro arco, quindi poco lontano, et vicino a quello sotto di cui vi è quella divota imagine della Madonna in marmo scolpita et attaccata al pilastro che risponde a quello dell'altar di san Giacomo; fece, dico, egli pingere e formare, né si può sapere se ancora questi siano venuti al mondo. Una di esse, vestita pontificalmente, credesi che c'habbia da essere l'ultimo sommo pontefice, sotto di cui *Fiet* – come dice il vangelo – *unum ovile, et unus pastor*. Diverse altre imagini, figure et altre cose, dimostranti cose future, si veggono e ne' muri e nel pavimento della chiesa, fatte far da lui, le quali di giorno in giorno con la loro riuscita si approvano". Ibid., p. 58r (chapter XCVIII).

held a primary role in the doctrines they had learnt from their former master, an armourer (*corazzaro*) named Benedetto,⁸⁸ who had left them a manuscript containing all his teachings. This document has unfortunately got lost, but from the transcripts of the Inquisition trials against these artisans, as well from a few of their letters that have survived, it is possible to partly reconstruct some of their beliefs, which not surprisingly revolved around the expectation of a man “who has to come”.⁸⁹ This figure, sometimes defined as the “great pastor” (*magno pastor*), would lead back, into one sheepfold, not only his own flock, but also the sheep from different flocks.⁹⁰ What is even more interesting, however, is the fact that in 1573 the members of the sect thought to have found the man they awaited. One of them, the shearer Lunardo, had indeed met a young nobleman, “about 25 year old, the most beautiful young man that was ever seen”.⁹¹ The nobleman had led Lunardo to St. Mark, where he had showed him that he in person was the man portrayed in the mosaics, the prophesied saviour. He had added then further scriptural reasons for his identification with “he who has to come”. Everything seemed to indicate therefore that he was the chosen one, the *capriolo* (fawn) mentioned in the Bible, since he was of *ca’ Priuoli*, that is to say a member of the ancient Venetian lineage of the Priuli.⁹²

At this point, one must temporarily stop following the course of these events to go ahead in time, precisely to 1589, when a new edition of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* appeared in Venice. The pictures were explained, both in Latin and in Italian, by Pasqualino Regiselmo. This is how he commented the IV *Vaticinium*:

We have represented here the thorny tree from a figure made of golden mosaic in the rich church of St. Mark in Venice, which has been shown to us by an illustrious gentleman in one booklet of his. I will keep secret the reasons why these and many other images can not be seen nowadays, even though they gave testimony to the abbot Joachim’s heavenly and divine skill in foretelling, and they also provided very clear signs about future events.⁹³

⁸⁸ See Niccoli, “Prophetie di musaicho”; Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, pp. 199-211.

⁸⁹ Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, p. 202.

⁹⁰ See Niccoli, “Prophetie di musaicho”, pp. 212-213.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 219.

⁹² See ibid., pp. 216-218. Cf. Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, pp. 205-209, in particular pp. 208-209 note 20 for a possible identification of the nobleman Priuli.

⁹³ “Rubum hic expressimus ex imagine aurea tessellata in D. Marci templo hic Venetiis, quod nobis ex libello illustrissimus vir ostendit: causas nunc reticemus quas in medium afferre possemus, cur non amplius et illa et

The coincidences between this cryptic comment and the revelations of the shearer Lunardo are rather striking: once more, there is a reference to an “illustrious gentleman” showing a booklet on the mosaics in St. Mark. One would probably go too far in considering this gentleman and the nobleman Priuli the same person, although both these stories share similar reticent attitudes on the part of those who witnessed the events. When Regiseldo published his book, some of the decorations in St. Mark had got lost, despite the explicit prohibition of the Procuratoria of the basilica, but he did not want to reveal the reasons for that. This could be put in relation to the surprising attitude of the clerical judge Giovanni Trevisan, the man who recorded the aforementioned confession of the shearer Lunardo. In fact Trevisan chose not to disclose the contents of that questioning to his colleagues of the Holy Office.⁹⁴ The reasons for this breach of the rules are unknown, although it can be hypothesised that the judge did so in order not to compromise, in case the allegations would be proven right, the position of a respected Venetian patrician. What these events show, in any case, was the wide circulation of prophetic themes at all levels of society. Not by coincidence, it was another member of the Priuli family – Alvisio – that showed to the humble priest Davidico the book with the papal vaticination about Pole. It was in this context that Pole had arrived in the 1520s to complete his studies. In Venice, he found himself in the middle of a real prophetic fervour, which in that decade was nurtured by the appearance, in rapid succession, of the first printed editions of Joachim’s writings. The next chapter will revolve, therefore, around the people who, either directly or through the mediation of friends and acquaintances, contributed to making Pole susceptible not only to the speculations about the *pastor angelicus*, but also to astrological and Hermetic studies, by which the prophetic production itself was deeply informed between the late Middle Ages and the early XVI century.

complures aliae imagines non videantur, quae non tantum Ioachimi coelestem divinamque praedicendi vim testatam faciebant, sed etiam plurimarum rerum futurarum casus clarissime indicabant. Alias dabitur fortasse de hic disserendi locus”. *Vaticinia*, Regiseldo (ed.), p. [I2v]; cf. p. [L4v] (Italian).

⁹⁴ See Martin, *Venice’s Hidden Enemies*, pp. 205-206.

CHAPTER VII

Thirty Years Under a Spell:

Pole's Second Life Among Revivalists, Visionaries and Esotericists

1.1. Behind the First Joachimist Editions. The Birth of Venice's Myth

Pole's first sojourn in Italy, between 1521 and 1526, has always been regarded as an important formative period, inasmuch as the connections he established while immersing himself in the study of classical literature and philosophy would prove significant for his intellectual trajectory and his future choices. One has consequently emphasised the influence both of Pole's compatriots at the University of Padua and of the intellectuals with whom he associated in the literary circle of Pietro Bembo. Whereas the humanistic facet of the milieu in which Pole completed his studies is widely acknowledged as a major strand of his experience in Italy, scholars tend to overlook the fact that his arrival in the Serenissima coincided with a Joachimist revival, which culminated in the publication, by the Venetian printing presses, of all the works that were then ascribed (in some cases wrongly) to the Calabrian abbot. The background to this publishing campaign, which was undertaken between 1516 and 1527 by the Augustinian friar Silvestro Meucci, with the assistance of a small group of friends, will constitute the outset of this chapter. The analysis of the context in which the first Joachimist printed editions were produced will also consider the 1515 publication in Bologna of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*. This book and its editor, the inquisitor Leandro Alberti, provide a point of access, in the second part, to the relations between Pole and some sectors of the Dominicans and Benedictines that shared, to a large extent, the *spirituali's* positions on doctrinal issues and religious dissent, as well as their prophetic perspectives. Lastly, in the third part I intend to show how Meucci's enterprise concerned, in different ways and to varying degrees, a whole series of people that fell under the spell of the Joachimist myth of the Angelic Pope, which they contributed to propagating and remoulding through a combination of astrological, kabbalistic and Hermetic themes. This heterogeneous constellation, which Pole repeatedly intersected not only in the course of his studies in Padua,

but also later on, during the 21 years he spent in Italy, was a not negligible influence on him (although usually regarded as such), thus representing a key source of the peculiar role he ascribed to the Angelic Pope's role within his own conception of Church reform.

Reasons of rivalry between the order Augustinian Hermits, to which Meucci belonged, and the Augustinian canons provided perhaps an impetus, as Marjorie Reeves argued, for the publication of Joachim's works. There is no doubt that, in some cases, the interpretation offered by Meucci aimed to appropriate the prophecies of the Calabrian abbot so as to legitimise the origins of his own order, which he also credited with embodying the new spiritual men of Joachim's third status.¹ Meucci's publishing campaign can be better understood, however, if seen within the political and religious context of the Venetian Republic in the first decades of the XVI century. At the very time when the power of the Serenissima had reached its apogee, the crushing defeat against the forces of the League of Cambrai, in the 1509 battle of Agnadello, was a watershed in the history of the Republic, which lost almost all its dominions in Northern Italy. This traumatic event undermined the rock-solid ethical and political certainties of the local patriciate, which was led to read the debacle as a divine punishment for the widespread moral decay. In this predicament (a sort of preview of what would happen 18 years later, following the sack of Rome), a sudden upsurge in eschatological speculations ignited a renewed interest in the prophetic tradition, where one could find premonitory signs of the catastrophe as well as gloomy predictions about the future of the Republic.²

The prophetic fervour intensified in the subsequent years, even though the new leap in the fortunes of Venice steered the conjectures towards virtually antithetical perspectives. The Serenissima's capacity to survive the crisis and to rapidly recover, regaining most of its dominions by virtue of an astute oscillation between different alliances, was now seen as the proof that the city, like a second Rome, was destined to endure perennially.³ There emerged a broad consensus that this constancy rested largely on the perfection of the Venetian mixed

¹ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 262-267.

² See Franco Gaeta, 'L'idea di Venezia', in *Storia della cultura veneta*, III/3, pp. 565-641 (614-625); Ottavia Niccoli, *Profeti e popolo nell'Italia del Rinascimento* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1987), pp. 36-37.

³ See Franco Gaeta, 'Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 23 (1961), pp. 58-75 (63-64).

government, which ensured the preservation of ample civic liberties. Thus the admiration for the constitutional and ethical superiority of this idealised model brought forth, in many cases, a true myth. Among the numerous panegyrics, the expressions of praise that, rather than being a merely rhetorical eulogistic exercise, stood out as reasoned appraisals of the peculiar political dimension of the Venetian myth were especially those by Florentine writers and politicians, namely by some members of the Orti Oricellari intellectual circle like Bernardo Rucellai and Donato Giannotti.⁴ It was the latter that wrote the accurate and systematic *Libro della Repubblica de' Vinitiani* [*Book on the Republic of the Venetians*] after his sojourn in Padua and Venice between 1525 and 1526, on which occasion he presumably met Pole.

As a matter of fact, the cultural relations between Florence and Venice had long been characterised by a mutual respect, on account of shared political and moral ideals. The alliance against Filippo Maria Visconti in 1425 had also inspired a sense of republican pride in what might be termed (somewhat imprecisely) the progressive sectors of both elites, who saw themselves as the allied guardians of civic liberties, on behalf of all Italy. The perceived affinity between these two groups (as well as between Florentine and Venetian humanists) was not substantially corroded either by subsequent political disputes, which led to the 1451 rupture in the diplomatic relations between Venice and Florence, or by the outbreak of the Italian wars in the late XV century.⁵

Nonetheless, the turbulent period inaugurated by Charles VIII's descent into Italy, with the consequent political, socio-economic and cultural upheavals, brought about an alteration of balance in this enduring ideal concord. Over the course of the troubled transition from the Republic to the Principate, Florence underwent major changes at all levels and entered a phase of relative isolation from the Italian and European affairs, on which the Tuscan city could exert, at least until Cosimo I's sway, an increasingly limited influence, in contrast to what had happened from the end of the XIV century until the years of Lorenzo the Magnificent. In the concurrent twilight of Florence's culturally hegemonic role, which also meant the weakening of the distinctive link between humanistic and civic ideals, the once twin republic of Venice ceased to be considered an equal and came to be seen instead, from

⁴ See Renzo Pecchioli, 'Il "Mito" di Venezia e la crisi fiorentina intorno al 1500', *Studi storici*, 3 (1962), pp. 451-492 (471-473, 483-486, 489-491).

⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 473-480.

the Florentine perspective, as a model of durability and effectiveness, owing to the relative continuity and stability of its institutions and traditions.⁶ From the beginning of the Florentine crisis in 1494, there was hardly a political debate in which Venetian constitutional model did not figure prominently as a benchmark for domestic reforms. One of those who most actively supported taking a leaf from Venice's book was Savonarola himself, under whose auspices a *Consiglio Maggiore* (modelled on the Venetian *Maggior Consiglio*) was introduced into Florence, along with the assignment of public offices by election rather than by draw.⁷

1.2. *The New Cradle of Reform and Prophetic Hub of Italy*

With the end of Savonarola's republic in 1498 and the return of the Medici in 1512, not only did Venice become a haven for many Florentine exiles, who thought of it as the only place where they could go on nurturing their republican aspirations, but in a way it also took over Florence's role as the catalyst for the reform of the Church. In this respect, it must be observed, incidentally, that Silvestro Meucci was of Tuscan origin, since he came from Castiglion Fiorentino. Previously, the close tie between the political fate of Florence, the renewal of the ecclesiastical institution and the restoration of the Christian concord had been greatly emphasised by Savonarola as early as the Advent of 1494. In his second sermon on Haggai, he had proclaimed Florence "the reformation of all Italy" and "the umbilicus of Italy", from where "the renewal will begin and spread over all".⁸ These and other themes, such as the commonplace expectation of the Angelic Pope, who would reduce the Christendom to one sheepfold, under one shepherd, were long echoed by Savonarola's followers or by other men that drew inspiration from his prophetic thought.⁹ Among them were, for example, the goldsmith Pietro of Bernardo (or Bernardino), who became the leader

⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 451-453, 480-481. For the development of Machiavelli's thought on Venice, see Gaeta, 'L'idea di Venezia', pp. 603-614; cf. Pecchioli, 'Il "Mito" di Venezia', pp. 486-489.

⁷ See Gaeta, 'L'idea di Venezia', pp. 596-598; Pecchioli, 'Il "Mito" di Venezia', pp. 63-64.

⁸ Quoted by Donald Weinstein, 'Savonarola, Florence, and the Millenarian Tradition', *Church History*, 27 (1958), pp. 291-305 (298).

⁹ On all the above-mentioned men, see Cesare Vasoli, 'L'attesa dell'età nuova in ambienti e gruppi fiorentini del Quattrocento', in *L'attesa dell'età nuova nella spiritualità della fine del Medioevo. 16-19 ottobre 1960* (Todi: Accademia Tudertina, 1960), pp. 370-432 (390 and ff.), in particular pp. 390-402 (Bernardino and his sect), 406-408 (Francesco of Montepulciano), 411-425 (Francesco of Meleto), 425-429 (Teodoro).

of the semi-clandestine sect of the *Unti* [Anointed],¹⁰ the friar Francesco of Montepulciano and the Greek monk Teodoro, who maintained “that he was a prophet, namely that Angelic Pope who was to come and had been prophesied by Fra Girolamo [Savonarola]”.¹¹ Claiming that “the Friar [Savonarola] often appeared to him and greatly inspired his prophecies”, Teodoro also preached about “the restoration of the Church [...], which was to be after the ruination of Rome and of its prelates”.¹² During the years when Teodoro (who would eventually abjure after being arrested in 1515) was gaining reputation as a prophet, Francesco of Meleto convinced himself that he had found out the date of the imminent last age, in which humankind would gather under one spiritual leader and the mysteries of Scriptures would be revealed to everyone. Meleto's symbolic and numerological analyses of the Old Testament (in particular of the prophets), by means of which he could make this discovery, were expounded in his *Convivio de' secreti della Scriptura Sancta* [*Symposium on the Secrets of the Holy Scripture*]. This work attracted the attention of Pietro Bembo and, above all, of the co-author of the *Libellus ad Leonem X*, Vincenzo Quirini, who presented Meleto to pope Leo X.¹³

The fact that in the 1520s a member of an important Venetian family like Quirini was held in high esteem by a Florentine pope and occupied an influential position in his entourage (albeit briefly, for Quirini died in September 1514) attests Venice's aforementioned rise to prominence as the new leading centre for the reform of the Church. This ascent was paralleled by a simultaneous process in which the Republic of Venice progressively supplanted Florence as the capital of Italian prophetism, not least because it was there that wider margins of liberty remained open after the decree on preaching *Supernae maiestatis praesidio*. The statement approved by the V Lateran Council in December 1516 forbade secular and regular clerics, as well as mendicant friars, from carrying out the ministry of preaching if their suitability was not previously certified by their superiors. In addition, preachers were warned not to be “so

¹⁰ On Pietro Bernardo, see Giampaolo Tognetti's entry in *DBI*, IX.

¹¹ “Che era profeta e che era quel papa angelico che aveva a venire, il quale promise frate Gerolamo”. Quoted in Vasoli, ‘L'attesa’, p. 426.

¹² “La renovatione della Chiesa [...], e che il frate [Savonarola] gli appariva spesso e molto favoriva le sue profezie, e che Italia non avrebbe rimedio, che l'andrebbe sotto sopra, di poi avrebbe a venire quattro trombe, cioè quattro predicatori, uno a Roma, a Napoli, a Milano et uno a Firenze, a predicare questa renovatione, la quale doveva essere dopo la ruina di Roma e sua prelati”. Ibid.

¹³ On Francesco of Meleto, see Vanna Arrighi's entry in *DBI*, XLIX. See also Stephen D. Bowd, *Reform Before the Reformation. Vincenzo Querini and the Religious Renaissance in Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 197-200.

presumptuous as to affirm or predict the exact moment when future evils, or the coming of Antichrist or the exact date of the Judgement will take place”.¹⁴

These measures, preceded by analogous actions at local level, attempted to stem the proliferation of prophets who publicly foretold misfortune and tribulation and often called for radical changes in the Church, as was the case with the sermons delivered in Rome by a certain fra Bonaventura.¹⁵ In May 1516, seven months before the issuing of the decree on preaching, this monk (whose life remains obscure) was arrested and sent to Castel Sant’Angelo “on the grounds that he had proclaimed himself to be the Angelic Pastor, elected by God through his mercy and established as the saviour of the world and of all humankind”. According to an imperial agent at the Holy See, the canon of Passau Stephan Rosin,¹⁶ a crowd of twenty thousand people had flocked around fra Bonaventura and worshipped him “as the true vicar of God”.¹⁷ Furthermore, the monk committed his convictions to a pamphlet *On the Vile Apostate and God-Damned Whore, the Church of Rome*.¹⁸ In the dedicatory epistle of this work, he presented himself again as the “pastor elected by God”¹⁹ and imposed excommunication on pope Leo X and the cardinals. In his capacity of angelic pope, providentially destined to save the world, he banned all Christian prelates from obeying the

¹⁴ “Tempus quoque praefixum futurorum malorum, vel Antichristi adventum aut certum die iudicii praedicare vel asserere nequaquam praesumant”. Mansi, XXXII, col. 946. For the complete text of the decree, see coll. 944-947. See also Nelson H. Minnich, ‘Prophecy and the Fifth Lateran Council (1512-1517)’, in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 63-87, in particular pp. 85-87.

¹⁵ On fra Bonaventura, see Giampaolo Tognetti’s entry in *DBI*, XI.

¹⁶ On Rosin, see Klaus Unterburger, *Das Bayerische Konkordat von 1583. Die Neuorientierung der päpstlichen Deutschlandpolitik nach dem Konzil von Trient und deren Konsequenzen für das Verhältnis von weltlicher und geistlicher Gewalt* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2006), p. 136, note 474; see also pp. 136-138.

¹⁷ “Frater Bonaventura [...] captivus fuit ductus ad Castellanum Sancti Angeli ex eo quod praedicavit se esse pastorem angelicum a Deo per misericordiam eius electum et salvatorem mundi constitutum universae humanitatis, cuius caput est Ecclesia Dei in Sion. Et ultra 20000 hominum ad eum confluerunt, qui eidem tanquam vero vicario Dei osculati fuerunt pedes”. Letter of Stephan Rosin to the prince-bishop of Gurk (Rome, 12 May 1516), published in Constantin von Höfler (ed.), ‘Analecten zur Geschichte Deutschlands und Italiens. Nach handschriftlichen, bisher unbenützten Berichten des päpstlichen Archives, der Bibl. Riccardiana zu Florenz, der Vallicelliana, Angelica, und der k. Universitäts-Bibliothek zu München’, *Abhandlungen der Historischen Klasse der königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 4 (1846), pp. 56-57 (56).

¹⁸ “Scripsit librum quem misit ad ducem Venetiarum et magnum eorum senatum cui indidit: *Liber Venturati de apostatrice abiecta et a Deo maledicta meretrice Ecclesia romana*”. Höfler, ‘Analecten’, p. 56 (my italics).

¹⁹ “Bonaventura [...], pastor a Deo electus et angelicis manis coronatus in salvationem mundi destinatus”. Ibid.

orders of the Roman Church,²⁰ whose power would be transferred to the “Church in Zion” after the conversion of the Turks at the hands of the king of France.²¹

Significantly, fra Bonaventura dedicated his book to the doge and to the members of the Venetian senate, whom he exhorted to print the pamphlet and to maintain friendly relations with the French monarch.²² Indeed, the monk's inclination to single out the Venetian magistrates as the recipients of his work should be seen in the light of Venice's growing prestige as the reference point for those who awaited or tried to conceive a reform of the Church. The patricians to whom fra Bonaventura addressed his prophecies were undoubtedly used to regard the government of the Republic and the administration of the ecclesiastical institution as inextricably intertwined. Insofar as, in their eyes, the Catholic faith ensured the maintenance of social stability by nurturing a shared identity, the state of moral and institutional crisis of the Church could not leave them indifferent, for it risked jeopardising the very political order of the Republic. The assumption that Venice would put the ecclesiastical reform into effect had found expression in prophecies such as the one contained in a late XV century manuscript. The text was accompanied by a drawing that showed, in the middle of a quadrangle, a key hanging from a rose on which was written the name “Venecia”, so as to suggest that this city held the key to a reformed Church. Thus the key signified, in the author's words, “that the ecclesiastical power of the new, or restored, Church will come into this holy state with many signs and miracles”.²³

²⁰ “In qua quidem epistola – Rosin wrote – privat et excommunicat et maledicit papam Leonem, universos cardinales et omnibus praelatis Christianorum, sub poena excommunicationis aeternae et excommunicationis latae sententiae et privationis, inhibet ne mandatis Romanae Ecclesiae obediant. Item praedicat se baptizatum imperatorem romanorum et translaturum imperium Ecclesiae ad Ecclesiam in Sion”. Ibid.

²¹ “Quoniam rex Franciae sit a Deo minister electus pro translatione Ecclesiae Dei in Sion ad conversionem Turcarum ad fidem Christi”. Ibid., p. 57.

²² “Hortatur praecipue Venetos ut continuo se exercitatione et bona amicitia cum rege Franciae contineant”. Ibid.

²³ Marion Leathers Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio. Prophecy and Politics in Renaissance Italy* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2001), p. 103.

2.1. An Intriguing Precedent: Leandro Alberti and the Vaticinia de Summis Pontificibus

It is within the context of Venice's emergence as the catalyst for Church reform and the new capital of Italian prophetism that one can actually comprehend the Joachimist revival in the Serenissima and, consequently, the appearance in Venice of the first editions of Joachim's works. Admittedly, Silvestro Meucci was not the only one that, between the second and third decade of the XVI century, set out to publish the works traditionally ascribed to the Calabrian abbot, although the series of editions he and his friends produced was by far the most important and still remains unparalleled. In July 1515, one year before the publication in Venice of the first prophetic anthology edited by Silvestro Meucci, the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus* were printed in Bologna by Girolamo Benedetti, with the title *Prophetia dello abbate Joachino circa li pontifici et R[omana] C[hiesa]*. This edition is particularly relevant to the subject of this chapter in view of the ties of friendship that united the Dominican Leandro Alberti, the author of the short biography of Joachim of Fiore that opened the volume, and the family of Marcantonio Flaminio. Interestingly, Alberti chose to send a copy of the *Vaticinia* to the Marcantonio's father, the humanist Giovanni Antonio, who expressed his gratitude by letter on 15 August 1515.²⁴ A few months later, in late 1515, the then 17-year-old Marcantonio arrived in Bologna, where he remained until 1517 to attend university. It was in the course of this time that the collaboration between Alberti and other prominent figures of the Bolognese academy and society, including the Flaminios, led to the realisation of the collective work *De viris illustribus ordinis praedicatorum* [*The Lives of Illustrious Dominicans*]. Besides being in charge of the revision of the whole work, Giovanni Antonio composed the most demanding biographies, such as those of Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, while Marcantonio wrote the life of the Blessed Maurice Csaky. The project also saw the collaboration of Marcantonio's cousin Sebastiano, later a physician who would face charges of heresy and homosexuality by the Holy Office of Imola.²⁵

²⁴ "Libellum accepi, quem mihi dono misisti, pulcherrimum ac mihi gratissimum Ioachimi illius celebrati vaticinia complexum". Quoted in Roberto Rusconi, "Ex quodam antiquissimo libello". La tradizione manoscritta delle profezie nell'Italia tardomedioevale: dalle collezioni profetiche alle prime edizioni a stampa', in *The Use and Abuse of Eschatology in the Middle Ages* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), pp. 441-472 (461-462).

²⁵ See Adriano Prosperi, 'Leandro Alberti inquisitore di Bologna e storico dell'Italia', in Adriano Prosperi, *Eresie e devozioni. La religione italiana in età moderna*, 3 vols (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2010), III, pp. 313-336 (316-318). See also Alessandro Pastore's entry on Marcantonio Flaminio in *D.B.I.*, XLVIII.

On more than one occasion, and for various reasons, other members of this group attracted the attention of the Inquisition, either directly – as was the case with Marcantonio Flaminio, who would assume a leading role in the *Ecclesia Viterbiensis* during the 1540s – or on account of their associations with suspects of heresy, as happened to the humanist Achille Bocchi. In 1540, the latter vouched for the Sicilian Minorite Paolo Ricci, who had arrived in Bologna two years earlier after having rejected the habit and under the new name of Lisia Fileno. Bocchi vainly hoped to spare Ricci prosecution by the local Inquisition, which had been alerted to his scandalous preaching in Bologna. The trial actually took place amid many hurdles (a group of people, for instance, tried to steal the trial records from the Inquisitor of Bologna and his vicar) and came to an end when Ricci abjured in Ferrara. Once imprisoned in Bologna, though, the former friar managed to flee to Switzerland, where he adopted the name of Camillo Renato, by which he is usually known.²⁶

A few years later, Leandro Alberti himself became inquisitor of Bologna, where he assisted and, between 1544 and 1546, substituted for his colleague Tommaso Maria Beccadelli.²⁷ In this new capacity, he usually acted with moderation by absolving many self-confessed suspects, even though his indulgence could be read at times as verging on connivance.²⁸ When the Bolognese priest Niccolò Bargellesi, for example, showed him the letters by which Marcantonio Flaminio had allegedly attempted to win him over to his opinions “on faith and works, on free will, on the benefit of Christ”, Alberti chose not to proceed against the son of his old friend Giovanni Antonio. On the contrary, the inquisitor opted to destroy those letters and convinced Bargellesi to do the same with the other part of his correspondence with Flaminio which he kept among his papers.²⁹ The most delicate situation Alberti had to face as an inquisitor, however, occurred on 17 October 1551, when Pietro Manelfi (formerly a Catholic priest and subsequently an important exponent of the Italian Anabaptism) decided to ease his conscience by confessing all his heresies. As if it were not enough, a fortnight later Manelfi provided Alberti with a written document in which he

²⁶ See Guido Dall’Olio, *Eretici e inquisitori nella Bologna del Cinquecento* (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1999), pp. 101-106.

²⁷ Presumably, Alberti substituted for Beccadelli also between 1546 and 1548. See *ibid.*, pp. 61, 174-175.

²⁸ See Prosperi, ‘Leandro Alberti’, p. 329.

²⁹ “Ho a caso ritrovate fra le mie scripture alcuno anno fa et le ho stracciate; et insieme le risposte, dove io lo riprehendeva” (deposition of Niccolò Bargellesi in the trial against Carnesecchi; Rome, 8 June 1557). See Dall’Olio, *Eretici e inquisitori*, pp. 133-138 (136, note 71).

listed the names of the hundreds of heretics he knew or with whom he had previously associated. The inquisitor's only reaction to these staggering revelations was apparently to send Manelfi to Rome with a letter destined for the Master of the Sacred Palace, Girolamo Muzzarelli.

2.2. *The Undeclared Alliance: Pole, Morone and the Dominicans of Bologna*

With respect to the approach to religious dissent and the stance on the demarcation dispute in which Julius III and the Inquisition were then embroiled, Alberti's decision to bring in the pope's theologian, instead of the commissioners of the Holy Office, reveals an affinity between him and the small group of his fellow brethren that, to varying extents and in different ways, got behind the papal attempts to stem the Inquisition's abuse of power.³⁰ These friars, all of whom had revolved around the Bolognese convent of San Domenico, either as fellow students or as pupils of Alberti, ended up entering involuntarily into a tacit contingent alliance with Pole, Morone and the *spirituali*. Alberti's former student Girolamo Muzzarelli was for instance one of the men that in 1552 were charged by Julius III with getting the Dominican friar Bernardo Bartoli to retract his accusations against Pole, Morone, Priuli, Flaminio, Vittoria Colonna and other figures connected with the *Ecclesia Viterbiensis*. Following Bartoli's public abjuration in July 1552, as discussed in chapter V, Muzzarelli also played a crucial behind-the-scenes role in the organisation of the 1553 meeting between Pole and Carafa at Saint Paul Outside the Walls, where the Theatine cardinal had to apologise for the secret investigation he had secretly conducted into the doctrinal views of his English colleague.

Over the course of their talk, in an attempt to repudiate Carafa's insinuations about his association with Flaminio, Pole claimed the credit for rescuing him from heretical beliefs. According to the English cardinal, Flaminio's "most holy" death in Viterbo (on 17 February 1550) confirmed this version of events, as could be testified by another Bolognese Dominican, Egidio Foscarari, who had heard Flaminio's confession shortly before his

³⁰ See Firpo, *La presa di potere*, chapter IV (pp. 167-202).

passing.³¹ A friend and former fellow student of Muzzarelli, whom he preceded as inquisitor, prior of Saint Dominic's convent and Master of the Sacred Palace, in May 1550 Foscarari was appointed to head the diocese of Modena at the request of the former bishop, Giovanni Morone, perhaps advised by Pole himself.³² Whether or not Foscarari actually associated with Pole and his circle (for which hypothesis there is currently no direct evidence), he certainly shared their inclination to avoid repressive strategies when confronted with religious dissent. Thus it comes as no surprise that, following Foscarari's 1558 imprisonment in Rome (for his alleged complicity with Morone) and the subsequent absolution under Pius IV, he took part in the collective project for the publication of Pole's biography and of his *De concilio*, which aimed to allay past suspicions and to substantiate the rehabilitation of those who had had to do, whether directly or not, with the cardinal of England.

It must be noted that, following the failure of the first Tridentine convocation, Pole spent some months in Bologna between May and August 1543. During this time, he sent Morone (who had remained in Trent) some letters that manifest the strong tie of friendship the two cardinals had developed in the course of their legation,³³ to which they had been assigned in October 1542, along with Pietro Paolo Parisio. For his part, Morone said to Bernardo Bartoli "greatest things in praise of the most reverend cardinal Pole", who had enlightened him "as to this matter of justification", thus getting him to embrace this doctrine – which he had once fiercely contested – as a most holy thing".³⁴

In April 1544, cardinal Morone himself was designated as legate to Bologna, where he stayed off and on until his resignation, on 13 July 1548.³⁵ Every now and then, in this period,

³¹ "Che riuscita poi facesse il Flaminio in casa sua ne fa fede la sua morte, che fu santissima et tale ch'ogn'uno devria desiderare et pregar Dio di farla tale. Et ne potria anco fare testimonianza il Maestro Sacri Palatii dall'ora, hora Vescovo di Modena, il quale confessò et esaminò il Flaminio poco inanzi la morte sua". Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 350.

³² On the occasion of his deposition at the defensive trial of cardinal Morone, the bishop of Camerino Berardo Bongiovanni (1512c.-1574) claimed that Morone had asked Pole for advice about the choice of his successor in the diocese of Modena: "Me ricordo che il cardinale d'Inghilterra li messe questo vescovo [Foscarari] inanzi, atto ad fare questo officio et provvedere contra li heretici di quella città". *Processo Morone*, NE, II, p. 820 (deposition of Berardo Bongiovanni; Rome, 20-21 December 1559).

³³ *Processo Morone*, II/2, pp. 1081-1083, note 1.

³⁴ "Mi disse cose grandissime in laude del cardinale reverendissimo Polo, et inter caetera come da lui era stato illuminato circa di questa materia della giustificatione, con dirmi che prima era inimicissimo di questa opinione ma, poi che parlò et prese pratica con monsignor Polo, prese questa dottrina come cosa santissima". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 78 (deposition of Bernardo Bartoli; San Gimignano, 7-10 July 1555); see also p. 77. Cf. pp. 8 (*informatio* of Giovanni Battista Scotti Rome, 1551) and pp. 216-217, 231-232 (Scotti's deposition; Bologna, 25-28 July 1555).

³⁵ See Wilhelm van Gulik and Konrad Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii et recentiores aevi*, editio altera quam

Leandro Alberti was his lunch guest, in company with the professor of Philosophy Antonio Bernardi of Mirandola (a friend of Marcantonio Flaminio's) and other Dominican friars, such as the Modenese Michele della Coltre and the Mantuan Reginaldo Nerli.³⁶ The latter friar, in 1545, was entrusted with the visitation of all the churches belonging to Morone's diocese of Modena, while two years later, in his capacity as theologian, he took part in the first Bolognese session of the Council.³⁷ Appointed inquisitor of Bologna on 1st May 1552, in the following year he was "compelled by superiors and by the zeal of the most holy faith" to produce a written statement,³⁸ which the Holy Office intended to add to its secret arsenal of evidence against Pole, Morone and the *spirituali*. The paucity of any relevant information, however, must have disappointed the Inquisition's expectations, thus arousing suspicions of complicity that contributed to undermining Nerli's position: in 1554, his plea for help to cardinal Morone,³⁹ who had just been nominated as protector of the Dominican order, did not spare him the humiliation of being abruptly removed from office and replaced as inquisitor of Bologna by the 33-year-old Eustachio Locatelli.

Reginaldo Nerli's evident reticence about Morone and Pole was maybe just one element in the Holy Office's dissatisfaction. As early as September 1550, the arrest of the Sicilian Benedictine Giorgio Rioli (better known as Giorgio Siculo) had caused the inquisitor of Bologna some embarrassment, inasmuch as in the same year he had allowed the publication of the monk's *Exposition of the Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Chapter of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans*.⁴⁰ Nerli was not the only one in this awkward position, given that he shared the

curavit Ludovicus Schmitz-Kallenberg, III (Münster: Libreria Regensbergiana, 1923), p. 27, col. 2, note 1.

³⁶ See the deposition of Michele della Coltre (Modena, 14-22 August 1555): "Quando io magnavo con esso reverendissimo monsignor [Morone] o in Bologna over in Roma, magnavano et altri suoi familiari et domestici [...] et forestieri. Et fra gli altri mi raccordo di messere Antonio della Mirandula, hora vescovo (come credo) di Caserta, et del padre frate Leandro [Alberti] da Bologna, qual mangiò insieme con me con Sua Signoria reverendissima essendo in Bologna". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 252-253. On Michele della Coltre, see the biographical note *ibid.*, pp. 248-250. Cf. the deposition of Reginaldo Nerli (Florence, 12-13 July 1555): "Mi ricordo che, havendo io col detto padre frate Michaelae [della Coltre] disinato con monsignor reverendissimo Morone, essendo legato in Bologna, retirati tutti tre in camera nel palazzo di Bologna, parlavamo non so che de l'adoratione della santa croce et delle reliquie di sancti". *Ibid.*, pp. 15-136.

³⁷ On Reginaldo Nerli, see the biographical note *ibid.*, pp. 26-31; cf. Dall'Olio, *Eretici e inquisitori*, pp. 230-238.

³⁸ "Il primo di giugno 1553, io frate Reginaldo Nerli da Mantua, inquisitore et regente del convento di San Domenico in Bologna, constretto da' superiori et dal zelo della santissima fede [...], confesso quanto qui scrivo con mia propria mano". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 32.

³⁹ See the letter which Nerli wrote to Morone on 30 May 1554, *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

⁴⁰ *Espositione di Giorgio Siculo, servo fedele di Iesu Christo, nel nono, decimo et undecimo capo della Epistola di San Paolo alli romani* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarello, 1550).

responsibility for issuing the publication licence for Siculo's works with the inquisitor of Ferrara Girolamo Papino. A former fellow student of Leandro Alberti in the Bolognese convent of San Domenico,⁴¹ Papino had also authorised the printing of Siculo's *Epistola alli cittadini di Riva di Trento* [*Epistle to the Citizens of Riva of Trento*], which came out shortly before the *Esposizione* and from the same publisher.⁴² When, shortly after the monk's apprehension in Ferrara, some students of the Royal College of Spain in Bologna, among whom Siculo had aroused considerable interest, asked the inquisitors a written judgement about his works, both Papino and Nerli admitted that they had consented to the publication of Siculo's writings, in which they could find, in Nerli's words, no trace of "impiety".⁴³ For his part, Papino reassured another Spanish student, Miguel de la Plaza, that to his mind the Benedictine's work was "very fruitful".⁴⁴

Admittedly, the name of Giorgio Siculo was never included in any of the indexes of prohibited books; still, it is problematic to square his imprisonment on charges of heresy with the approval expressed by the two inquisitors. On 18 January 1552, the physician Pietro Bresciani, a self-confessed heterodox that had decided to abjure,⁴⁵ declared for instance that he had formed "a very high opinion" of the Benedictine monk not only because Siculo "vigorously disputed" the Lutheran doctrines, but also because he was "commended by the father inquisitor of Ferrara".⁴⁶ It is certainly true, on the one hand, that Siculo's *Epistola alli cittadini di Riva di Trento* aimed to vehemently counter the wave of Protestant propaganda ensuing from the dramatic death by starvation of the jurisconsult Francesco Spiera, who in 1548 had convinced himself that, by abjuring his previous beliefs, he had committed the mortal sin against the holy spirit and was not, therefore, among the elect.⁴⁷ Siculo took issue in particular with the interpretation of this event as a sure sign that the Calvinist doctrine of

⁴¹ On Girolamo Papino, see Adriano Prosperi, 'Girolamo Papino e Bernardino Ochino: documenti per la biografia di un inquisitore', in Adriano Prosperi, *L'Inquisizione romana. Letture e ricerche*. Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2003, pp. 99-123, in particular pp. 105-123.

⁴² *Epistola di Georgio Siculo, servo fidele di Iesu Christo, alli cittadini di Riva di Trento contra el mendatio di Francesco Spiera et falsa dottrina di protestanti* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarello, 1550).

⁴³ See Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 167.

⁴⁴ "Circa l'opera de Georgio Siculo impressa in Bologna, vi dico che per mio parere è de multo frutto né contiene cosa degna de replensione, et più volte ho soddisfatto ad pieno ad alcuni quali senza ragioni la impugnavano". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 166.

⁴⁵ On Pietro Bresciani, see John A. Tedeschi's entry in *D.B.I.*, XIV.

⁴⁶ "Et vedendo in alchune cose impugnare lutherani gagliardamente et essendomi laudato dal padre inquisitor di Ferrara, io ne hebbi ottimo concetto et aspettava da lui gran cose". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 145.

⁴⁷ On Spiera's case, see *ibid.*, pp. 102-122. On the Protestant propaganda, see pp. 123-130.

predestination was truthful. On the other hand, though, his polemic against the Protestant propaganda was only the outer layer of the *Epistola*, which explicitly justified the Nicodemism of the “large number of priests and friars, men and women” – hidden “in diverse regions and countries of the Roman doctrine” and secretly “sharing the Protestants’ opinion – who went on abiding by the Catholic rites and sacraments (which they considered “false and abominable”) “for fear of getting caught and maltreated by the inquisitors”.⁴⁸ In the author’s eyes, and pending different decisions by the ecclesiastical authorities, these people did right to temporarily dissimulate, not least out of consideration for their “infirm brothers” [“propter infirmos fratres”].⁴⁹

2.3. *The Invisible Church of the “Strong in the Faith”*

During the early XVI century, and especially after Luther’s protest, the age-old issue of the legitimacy of religious dissimulation had once again come to the fore, as part of the debate over Christian freedom and the relationship between Law and Gospel.⁵⁰ Erasmus had been the most authoritative assertor of a pro tempore [“ad tempus”] dissimulation, aimed at avoiding hurting the weak, and his views about this matter had considerable influence on Pole. In his *De unitate*, the Englishman displayed a detailed knowledge of Erasmus’s exposition of the epistolary dialogue between Jerome and Augustine about the passage of the *Letter to the Galatians* [Gal. 2, 11-14] in which Paul reprehended Peter for his hypocrisy.⁵¹ It is not without reason that both Erasmus’s paraphrase of the Pauline epistles and his *Annotationes in novum Testamentum* [*Annotations on the New Testament*] – where he wrote the critical note

⁴⁸ “O quanto gran numero de preti e frati, huomini e donne, i quali sono dell’openione de’ protestanti nascosti in diverse reggioni e paesi della dottrina romana, che per timore de non esser presi e maltrattati dall’inquisitori consentino con parole e con le proprie persone a culti e sacramenti reputati da lor stessi falsi et abominevoli appresso Dio e soi santi!”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 148.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁵⁰ See Albano Biondi, ‘La giustificazione della simulazione nel Cinquecento’, in *Eresia e Riforma nell’Italia del Cinquecento. Miscellanea I*, Firenze-Chicago, Sansoni-The Newberry Library, 1974, pp. 7-68 (10-14).

⁵¹ See Pole, *De unitate*, pp. LXIXr-LXXIv. Cf. Erasmus, *Opera omnia* (Leiden), VI, coll. 807-810, in particular notes 16 and 17. The epistolary debate between Jerome and Augustin is published in Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series latina*, 221 vols. (Lutetia Parisiorum: Migne, 1844-1866; henceforward *Patrologia Latina*), XXXIII, coll. 111-114, 154-158, 275-291 (epistles 28, 40, 82: Augustine to Jerome), 243-245, 251-263 (epistles 72, 75: Jerome to Augustine). Cf. Jerome’s commentary on the epistle to the Galatians (*Patrologia Latina*, XXVI).

about the aforementioned debate – were present in Pole's library, together with other works of the Dutch humanist.⁵²

The same passage of the *Epistle to the Galatians* continued giving food for thought about the extent of conformity with Catholic rites. On this Pauline letter Luther wrote three commentaries, in the last of which (published in 1535) he proclaimed himself willing to tolerate outward compliance with ceremonies, but only on condition of taking good care not to conceive them as means for achieving salvation. "It is not disgraceful – Luther explained – to behave as the Jews, but rather to make it compulsory and necessary for salvation".⁵³ In the absence of this awareness, any ambiguous behaviour would constitute a betrayal of the evangelical truth.⁵⁴ On the other side of the Alps, Pole's closest friends criticised instead the "arrogance" ["arrogantia"], the "false zeal" ["falso zelo"] and the "human haughtiness" ["superbia humana"] that had led the Protestant reformers to break "the unity of the Catholic Church". In this spirit, they had started to "recklessly judge the dogmas and customs of the Church, rigidly condemning all those who revere and follow them with genuine wholehearted humility".⁵⁵ According to Pietro Carnesecchi, these reservations about the Protestants' foolish pride ("lover of novelties and enemy of common paths")⁵⁶ did not prevent Marcantonio Flaminio and Alvise Priuli, however, "taking some things" from Luther's doctrine, "as though they drew gold out of ordure, and they gave back the rest (as they say) to the cook".⁵⁷

The great confidence with which the members of Pole's Viterbese circle navigated the vast "diversity of opinions" ["diversità d'opinioni"] without yielding to the unacceptable

⁵² See Pastore, *Due biblioteche umanistiche*, pp. 279, 286.

⁵³ "Iudaisare non malum, sed cogere, facere necessarium ad salutem". *Luthers Werke*, WA, XL/1, p. 213.

⁵⁴ "Iterum admoneo iudaisare per se non esse malum, quia res indifferens est sive suilla sive alia carne vescaris; sed sic iudaisare ut propter conscientiam abstineas a certis quibusdam cibis, hoc negare est Christum et evangelium". Ibid., p. 211. Cf. ibid., XL/1, XL/2 (pp. 1-184) for the whole commentary on the *Epistle to the Galatians*. The first commentary, published in 1519, is ibid., II, pp. 443-618.

⁵⁵ "Giudicar temerariamente i dogmi et l'usanze della Chiesa, condannando rigidamente tutti quelli che con vera humiltà di cuore le riveriscono et seguitano [...]. Et noi, signor mio [...], humiliamoci nel cospetto di Dio, non ci lasciando indurre da ragione alcuna, per verisimile ch'ella ne paresse, a separarci dall'unione della Chiesa catholica". Flaminio, *Lettere*, p. 136 (Flaminio to Carnesecchi; 1st January 1543).

⁵⁶ "Amatrice delle novità et nimica delle vie comuni". Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Il che faceva che né il Flaminio né il Priuli approvassino intieramente la dottrina di esso Luthero, dicendo che, essendo extra Ecclesiam, era per consequente extra caritatem et che, sebene haveva detto bene in molte cose et interpretato bene molti luoghi della Scrittura, non si poteva per questo concludere che haveva lo spirito di Dio, se non quanto Dio li l'haveva concesso a beneficio et edificatione de' suoi eletti. Et così pigliavano alcune cose della dottrina sua tanquam aurum ex stercore colligentes, et caetera (ut aiu[n]t) reddebant coquo". *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/2, p. 558.

“refusal of obedience” [“subtrattione della obedientia”]⁵⁸ was rooted in their belief that, to quote Juan de Valdés,

God gives the faith according to each one’s capacity, just as we do not pour equally hot water into a glass vase and into a clay vase alike, or into a clay vase and into a copper vase alike, thus adapting to the vase’s property, with intent not to break it.⁵⁹

Both in the Neapolitan sodality of Juan de Valdés and in Pole’s *Ecclesia Viterbiensis*, these principles underpinned the gradual introduction of newcomers to an experience of Christian regeneration, whose first stage usually consisted in the mere acknowledgement of the justification by faith alone as a Catholic doctrine, firmly grounded in the holy Scripture.⁶⁰ Valdés, for example had taught this doctrine to Pietro Carneseccchi “in a concise way, without expanding on it either with subtleties or with inferences, as one that claims to build and not to destroy”.⁶¹ Marcantonio Flaminio, in turn, had tried to instil the “new opinions” [“nove opinioni”] on justification in Alvise Priuli, “though soberly, and without any scandal”.⁶²

As was seen in chapter III, the same pedagogical discretion informed the frequent conversations which cardinal Pole had with various friars in his Viterbese residence. Hence the circumspect sibylline answers he usually gave when asked about the theological corollaries of the doctrine of justification: “Look whether the thing is true, and do not wonder whether or not errors stem from it”.⁶³ During his Inquisition trial, Pietro Carneseccchi

⁵⁸ Ibid. Cf. p. 568: “Se detti heretici [luterani] si fussino contenuti dentro a’ termini di questo articolo [justification by faith alone] et non havessino per le loro passioni voluto destruere il papato romano, non harriano forse meritato quel nome di heretici; oltra che, insin che non era fatto il concilio, non si poteva neanche quanto a questo articolo giustamente condemnarli, se non in quanto alle illationi et conclusioni che deducevano da tale principio in ruina et destruttione della Chiesa catholica”.

⁵⁹ “Dio li dà la fede secondo la loro capacità, sì come noi non poniamo l’acqua tanto calda in un vaso di vetro come in uno di terra, né in uno di terra come in uno di rame, accomodandosi alla capacità del vaso, non volendo che si rompa”. Valdés, *Considerationi*, p. Ee2[r] (103).

⁶⁰ See *Processi Carneseccchi*, II/2, pp. 567-569 (LVII questioning of Pietro Carneseccchi; Rome, 4 December 1566).

⁶¹ “Così asciutta, senza impinguarla altrimenti con le circumstantie né con le illationi, come quello che faceva professione di edificare et non di destruere”. Ibid., II/1, p. 144 (XI questioning; Rome, 23 luglio 1566).

⁶² “Sobriamente però et senza scandalo alcuno”. Ibid., II/1, p. 196, II/3, p. 1042. See above, p. 98.

⁶³ “Ho inteso, credo dal reverendo padre frate Angelo Diacceto nostro provinciale al presente, che disputando un giorno il padre frate Thomaso da San Miniato prefato col reverendissimo cardinal Polo de materia iustificationis, disse il prefato fra’ Thomaso: «Monsignor reverendissimo, se la dottrina della Signoria Vostra fusse vera, ne sequiterebbono i tali [e] i tali errori contra fidem» [...]. Sua Signoria reverendissima rispose: «Guardate se la cosa è vera, et non cercate se ne sequitano errori o non»”. *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 148 (deposition of Matteo Lachi). During his questioning, Angelo Cattani of Diacceto recounted the same

confessed that he could not even pinpoint the moment when he had been led to draw inferences [“illationi”] from the doctrine of justification,

because these are things – as everyone knows – that crept little by little into our minds, almost without one’s noticing it, except when one has virtually accustomed oneself to holding this or that opinion. Yet I believe that for me it started in Viterbo during the year 1541, since I was there with Flaminio at the cardinal of England’s.⁶⁴

In spite of the assiduity with which they went on confessing their sins and receiving the Sacrament, the people that congregated at Pole’s palace in Viterbo were thus persuaded, little by little,

“that we needed neither the sacrament of penance nor contrition nor satisfaction to recover the grace we lost owing to the deadly sin, nor was it necessary to cleanse ourselves of the crime of our sins in Purgatory, for Christ has [...] abundantly given satisfaction for everybody with his death”.⁶⁵

What lay behind this gradual and discreet process of proselytism, which was carried out by the charismatic leaders of the Neapolitan and the Viterbese sodalities, was the conviction that “the Christian faith is such a delicate food that few stomachs can tolerate it”.⁶⁶ Since the “Christian business does not consist in knowledge, but in experience”⁶⁷, it is “peculiar to few” [“es de pocos”], for “there will always be more people that follow the world than those who follow Christ”.⁶⁸ On the strength of this, it is necessary that the “perfect men”, who are

conversation; see *ibid.*, pp. 396-397.

⁶⁴ “Perché son cose – come ogniuno sa – che obrepunt a pocho a pocho nelli animi nostri, senza che l’huomo quasi se ne possi accorgere, si non dapoi che ha fatto quasi l’habito nel tenere queste o quelle opinioni. Imperò credo che io cominciassi a Viterbo ne l’anno 1541, trovandomi illic appresso il cardinale d’Inghilterra insieme col Flaminio”. *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/1, p. 145.

⁶⁵ “Che non ce bisognasse il sacramento della penitentia né contritione né satisfatione per recuperare la gratia perduta per il peccato mortale, né che bisognasse purgare altrimenti il reato de’ peccati nostri in purgatorio, havendo Cristo satisfatto [...] abundantemente per tutti con la morte sua”. *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ “La fede cristiana è un cibbo tanto delicato che pochi stomachi lo soffrono”. Valdés, *Matteo*, p. 218.

⁶⁷ “Il negocio christiano non consiste in scientia, ma in esperientia”. Valdés, *Considerationi*, pp. [O5v]-[O6r] (55). See also pp. [O7v], P[1r] (57). The first attestation of this statement is in the *Prólogo* of the *Comentario a los Salmos*, where Valdés explains Giulia Gonzaga that “el negocio cristiano no consiste en ciencia, sino en experiencia”; consequently, “tanto se alcanza de ello quanto se siente y se experimenta”. Valdés, *Salmos*, p. 7.

⁶⁸ “Porque siempre serán mas los hombres que seguirán al mundo que los que siguieren a Cristo”. Valdés, *I*

“whole in Christ” and “strong in the faith” [“uomini perfetti e intieri in Cristo” and “forti nella fede”],⁶⁹ constantly dedicate themselves to “dissimulating their perfections” as well as their “spiritual dignity”,⁷⁰ in order to avoid scandalising those who “are still children” [“ancora sono fanciulli”].⁷¹ Far from manifesting their “Christian liberty in presence of weak Christians that are infirm in the faith”, the “perfect” will rather accommodate themselves “to their incapacity and frailty, dexterously pretending to draw them to the knowledge” of the “evangelical truth” and of the “Christian verity”.⁷² Valdés’s distinction between the “strong” and the “infirm in the faith” – which is echoed, as was shown earlier on, in Siculo’s *Epistola* – is evidently based on the same assumption that can be discerned in some of Pole’s works (such as his commentaries on the Psalms), that is to say the overlap between at least two levels of religious experience: one “hackneyed and ordinary” [“trita et vulgaris”], the other “more secret and known to fewer” [“secretior et cognita paucioribus”].⁷³ It is but these latter “few and greatly loved”, God’s “selected servants”, that can enjoy his “secret and concealed” help and apprehend “his arcana”.⁷⁴

Corintios, p. 143.

⁶⁹ Valdés, *Matteo*, p. 372.

⁷⁰ “Si devono umiliar dissimulando la loro dignità spirituale, quando sarà necessario che la dissimuleno mostrandosi eguali agli altri uomini”. Ibid., p. 158.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 372. Cf. pp. 213-214, 243, 260, 373, 445.

⁷² “Mi debbo guardare quanto mi sarà possibile di non usare la mia libertà christiana in presentia di christiani fiacchi et infermi nella fede”. Valdés, *Considerationi*, p. V[1r]. “Se una persona christiana, che intende la verità evangelica et conosce la verità christiana si troverà fra persone che vanno intendendo et conoscendo l’una et l’altra cosa, accommodandosi alla loro incapacità et fragilità frà come fanno essi, pretendendo destramente di tirarli alla cognitione di ambidue le cose”. Ibid., pp. [U8r]-[U8v] (76); cf. pp. [T4v]-V2[r] (76) and pp. [V7v]-X2[r] (80). For the English translation of this passages I have availed myself of the English edition: *The Hundred and Ten Considerations of Signior Iohn Valdesso* (Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1683).

⁷³ BAV, *Vat. lat.*, 5969, f. 22v.

⁷⁴ “Quod idem dicere possumus de misericordiae ratione et de Dei adiutorio hominibus allato, nimirum, quod et illud sit duplex: alterum apertum et manifestum, alterum secretum et absconditum nec omnibus ita notum, sed a paucissimis cognitum maxime ante Christi adventum [...]. Est beneficium non nisi paucis et Deo admodum dilectis datum [...]. Nec [Deus] secreta sua revelat passim omnibus sed paucis, et his selectis suis servis”. Ibid., ff. 22v, 45r, 30v.

2.4. *Devoted Followers, Shadowy Backers and Double-Dealers: the Vicissitudes of Giorgio Siculo*

Far from being merely coincidental, the glaring parallelism between the radical Nicodemism theorised by Giorgio Siculo in his *Epistola* and the analogous ideas expounded in the writings of Juan de Valdés and Reginald Pole originated from shared underlying spiritual orientations, which were fed by actual relations between the Sicilian monk and other people that were in contact either with Pole or with members of Valdés's Neapolitan group. As early as 1537, for instance, Siculo had met his Benedictine brother Benedetto Fontanini in the monastery of San Niccolò l'Arena beside Catania, an important religious house that had been part of the Sicilian Benedictine Congregation until 1506, when it had joined, along with other five Sicilian monasteries, the Cassinese Congregation.⁷⁵ Before this amalgamation took place, two abbots of the latter Congregation went on a visit to Sicily for the purpose of ascertaining the feasibility of the project. One of them, Marco of Cremona, became acquainted with Pole during the 1530s, when they would "most willingly" talk "about divine things".⁷⁶ Within the more and more pronounced hermeneutic circularity in which Pole inclined to inscribe biblical events and his own life, he regarded the monk Marco as the spiritual father "that begot me in Christ".⁷⁷ Likewise, Pole later identified the marquise Vittoria Colonna (who in October 1541, shortly after the execution of Pole's mother at the end of May, moved to the convent of Saint Catherine in Viterbo) as his "dearest mother in Christ".⁷⁸ In the Paduan abbey of Santa Giustina, Marco of Cremona usually gave biblical lectures that attracted many students from the University of Padua. His Pauline readings of the spring 1537, when he dealt with the thorny issues of grace and free will without restraint, were particularly successful, even though they were also accompanied by the protests of some

⁷⁵ The other five monasteries of the Sicilian Benedictine Congregation were: San Martino delle Scale beside Palermo, San Placido di Calonerò (Messina), Santa Maria Nuova di Monreale, Santa Maria di Gangi Vecchio (Cefalù) and Santa Maria di Fundrò in Piazza Armerina. On these religious houses, see Massimo Zaggia, *Tra Mantova e la Sicilia nel Cinquecento*, III, pp. 709-712 and *passim*.

⁷⁶ "Marcus monachus [...], quem cum ego libentissime de divinis rebus loquentem audio". Pole, *Epistolae*, I, p. 479 (Pole to Gian Matteo Giberti; Rovolon, 10 August 1536).

⁷⁷ "Qui me in Christo genuit". Mayer, *The Correspondence of Reginald Pole*, I, p. 131 (Pole to Pietro Bembo; Rome, 22 January 1537).

⁷⁸ "Cum carissimam nostram in Christo matrem maximo coniunctam me habiturum scio". Pole, *Epistolae*, III, p. 14 (Pole to Contarini; Rome, 4 February 1541). Colonna resided in the convent of Santa Caterina until the summer of 1544.

prominent figures in the ecclesiastical hierarchies, namely the suffragan bishop Dionigi Zanettini, known as Grechetto. On this occasion, Gasparo Contarini intervened from Rome (with the support of the abbot Gregorio Cortese) to spare Marco measures of censure.⁷⁹

As the abbot Marco gave his controversial lectures in Padua and hold spiritual conversations with Pole, his Benedictine brother Benedetto Fontanini left the Venetian monastery San Giorgio Maggiore (where he had had the opportunity to meet Flaminio and Pole) and moved to San Niccolò l'Arena. Here Giorgio Rioli had taken his vows three years earlier, in 1534. It was in this very monastery, between 1537 and 1542, that Fontanini worked on the first version of the *Beneficio di Cristo*, whereas later on he undertook the translation of “the books of Giorgio [Siculo] from the Sicilian language into good Italian”, as declared by another follower of Rioli, the priest and educator Nascimbene Nascimbeni.⁸⁰ What Nascimbeni termed the “Georgian sect”⁸¹ – that is to say the group of people that, like Fontanini, “approved Giorgio’s doctrine and vision and awaited the spirit of God on the earth, as he had promised”⁸² – included many other Benedictines besides the first author of the *Beneficio di Cristo*. Among them were the three representatives of the Cassinese Congregation at the Council of Trent: Isidoro Cucchi of Chiari (whose *Adhortatio ad concordiam* was discussed in chapter III)⁸³, Crisostomo Calvini and Luciano degli Ottoni, one of Siculo’s staunchest supporters as well as his main contact within the Council.

As a matter of fact, the movements of Giorgio Siculo after 1545 closely followed the trajectory of the Tridentine, to the extent that he went to Bologna when the Council was transferred there in 1547. Previously (December 1546), he had indirectly intervened in the debate on justification by writing Ottoni a letter where he expressed both his reservations about the abbot’s views on this doctrinal matter (about which Ottoni had delivered a speech that had caused a stir at the Council) and his own theses⁸⁴. Meanwhile, Siculo stayed in Riva del Garda, in the hope of being admitted into the conciliar father’s presence to expound his doctrine, which had been revealed to him by no less a person than Christ, as he claimed in the

⁷⁹ See Dittrich, *Regesten und Briefe*, pp. 270, 288-290. Cf. Cortese, *Opera*, I, p. 120.

⁸⁰ “Costui [Fontanini] tradusse i libri di Giorgio dalla lingua siciliana in buon lingua italiana”. Quoted in Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 335.

⁸¹ “Setta georgiana”. Ibid., p. 324.

⁸² “Approbava la dottrina et visione di Giorgio et aspettava il spirito di Dio in terra promesso da quello”. Ibid., p. 335.

⁸³ See above, pp. 74-75.

⁸⁴ See Prosperi, *L’eresia del Libro Grande*, pp. 86-101.

closing section of his letter to Ottoni.⁸⁵ Among Giorgio's brethren, rumour had it that "one evening [...] Christ had appeared to him" and opened his chest, in which "one could see all the doubts of the holy Scripture". It was on the occasion of this vision that Siculo had been told "to go to the Council in order to speak with the cardinal of England, Pole".⁸⁶

Within the space of a short time, the proliferation of evidence that Pole looked with favour on Giorgio Siculo proved that the rumour was no empty boast, even though the name of the English cardinal – who was the protector of the Benedictine Congregation – remained concealed behind a veil of discretion. "[Siculo] will be introduced to speak by that great man you know": thus did Luciano degli Ottoni wrote to the duke of Ferrara, Ercole II d'Este, in November 1550, following the end of the Bolognese phase and the new convocation of the Council at Trent. According to Ottoni, the Sicilian monk went on "promising that he will speak in the Council, and Christ will speak through him", so as to make clear that Christ, "and not father Georgio, will be the one speaking".⁸⁷ A few months earlier, in August 1550, the Inquisition trial against Girolamo Allegretti (a former Dominican friar from Split that had led a Protestant community before joining an Anabaptist and antitrinitarian group),⁸⁸ brought to light the information that Siculo's *Epistola* had been written at the request of "a figure [...] of respect", whose name Allegretti preferred not to mention for the time being.⁸⁹ Oddly enough, either the inquisitors did not ask for it or, if they did, the name was not recorded.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, in the highly likely event that the "figure of respect" corresponded to Reginald Pole, the absolute non-randomness of the convergence of opinions between the Sicilian monk and the English cardinal – as revealed by the similarities in some of their works – would be confirmed beyond a shadow of doubt.

⁸⁵ "Christus vere apparuit mihi et doctrinam istam me docuit". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 97.

⁸⁶ "Io intesi, stando nel medesimo monasterio di Santo Giorgio nel stesso anno che un don Giorgio Siculo da Catania diceva che una sera a hora di compieta alli 23 hore li apparrebbe un Christo, quale diceva che Christo li haveva aperto il petto e dentro si vedeva tutti i dubbi della Scrittura sacra. E diceva che lo stesso Christo li haveva detto che andasse al concilio a parlare col cardinale Polo d'Inghilterra". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 377 (deposition of the Mantuan Benedictine Giacomo Coppino, on the occasion of his 1569 Inquisition trial in Siena).

⁸⁷ "[Siculo] promette e sempre ha promesso [...] che parlerà in concilio, e che Christo parlerà per bocca sua, e che 'l farà vedere che esso sarà quello che parlerà e non don Georgio, e che sarà introdotto a parlare per meggio di quello grande homo che si sa". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 170 (Ottoni to Ercole II d'Este; Bologna, 23 November 1550).

⁸⁸ On Girolamo Allegretti, see Delio Cantimori's entry in *D.B.I.*, II.

⁸⁹ "Lo opuscolo de Giorgio Siculo, che esso scrive contra le letere di Francesco Spiera ad instantia de un personazo qual è di respeto, et volendo Vostra Signoria ch'io lo dica lo dirò, ma per hora lo tacio per bon respeto". Quoted in Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 203.

⁹⁰ See *ibid.*

Siculo's daring argument for the legitimacy of religious dissimulation, originally formulated in his *Epistola alli cittadini di Riva di Trento* (in terms that closely resemble the line of reasoning developed in some of Pole's works), was carried to extremes in a lost tract that became known among his disciples as the *Libro Grande* [Great Book]. Here Siculo cast off the allusive tone of the *Epistola* to draw radical inferences from the doctrine which he had learned "through a vision and revelation" and whose content he intended "to disclose at the Council of Trent".⁹¹ His conclusions, in essence, went in the direction of the same radical spiritualism that informed both Pole's *De reformatione* and his supposed papal coat of arms. The notion of reform delineated in the cardinal's treatise was underpinned by the ideal of a spiritual Church that tended to deprive the visible structure of the ecclesiastical institution of all meaning. Siculo, likewise, ended up destroying the very *raison d'être* of the Church by denying

all the sacraments of the Church, the freedom of the Church, and moreover he said that our soul was not created by God but by men, together with body. He said there existed neither Hell nor Purgatory, but rather that our soul goes on flying through the air until the judgement day; and when one is in the grace, one can not sin any more, and when there is sin, one can not return to the grace. This man negated the trinity and many other things, and [he maintained that] all the miracles of the sacrament were performed by the devil.⁹²

Admittedly, though, the contents of the *Libro grande*, as well as its actual title (*On Christian Truth and Apostolic Doctrine Revealed By Our Lord Jesus Christ to His Servant Georgio Siculo of the Land of Saint Peter*),⁹³ can be only deduced from later depositions of

⁹¹ "Io ne hebbi ottimo concetto et aspettava da lui gran cose, come prometteva, in sussidio de la Giesia, per una visione et revellatione qual diceva haver hauto da Christo Signor Nostro, la qual doveva publicar nel concilio di Trento". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 145 (confession of Pietro Bresciani; Bologna, 18 January, 1552). Cf. above, p. 000 and note 00.

⁹² "Tutte le heresie sue, tolte d'un libro de ditto Georgio Siculo intitolato il *Libro maggiore* [...], sono tante che mai tal cose forno ritrovate in huomo solo. Negava costui tutti gli sacramenti della Chiesa, la libertà della Chiesa, et più diceva l'anima nostra non esser creata da Iddio ma dagli huomini insieme col corpo. Diceva non esservi né inferno né purgatorio, ma l'anima nostra andar volando per aria sino al giorno del giudicio, et quando sarà in gratia più non potere peccare, et quando sarà peccato più non poter ritornar in gratia. Negava costui la trinità et molte assai altre cose, et tutti gli miracoli dil sacramento esser fatti per opera dil diavolo". Quoted in Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 232 (list of heresies which were read on 30 March 1551, when Siculo was supposed to abjure); cf. pp. 263-274.

⁹³ *Della verità christiana et dottrina appostolica rivellata dal nostro signor Giesù Christo al servo suo Georgio Siculo della terra di santo Pietro*. *Ibid.*, p. 272.

Siculo's former followers, who had transcribed, translated and published the book, until the Inquisition investigations would abruptly block the clandestine circulation of this work, thus making it disappear forever into thin air. One of the accused, the physician Francesco Severi, would confess that in 1548 Benedetto Fontanini had delivered the *Libro grande* to him at the request of father Giorgio.⁹⁴ Shortly after Siculo's apprehension in Ferrara, indeed, the monks of San Benedetto Po found the *Libro grande* [Great Book] in the cell of their former fellow brother Fontanini.⁹⁵ In the course of the 1570 Inquisition trial against Nascimbene Nascimbeni, it also emerged that Luciano degli Ottoni, who "extolled the doctrine" of Siculo and was responsible for persuading Nascimbeni himself, had translated into Latin both the *Great Book* and the epistle *De Iustificatione* [On Justification], that is to say the letter Siculo had sent Ottoni when the decree on justification was under discussion at Trent.⁹⁶

As a consequence of the tenacity with which, even many years after the death of father Giorgio, the Inquisition authorities went on hunting down the members of his sect, the *Libro grande* continued to constitute a major source of troubles for his owners, who involuntarily contributed to its sinking into oblivion by hastening to remove all traces of it. The numerous inquiries between the late 1560s and the 1570s, however, did not shed light either on the anomalies of Siculo's irregular execution or on the actual extent of the approval he met. The latter aspect remained largely a grey area, especially with regard to the identification of the monk's sympathisers within aristocratic circles, the Roman curia and even among those in charge of preserving religious orthodoxy. In this respect, the approval expressed by Girolamo Papino and Reginaldo Nerli, who granted the publication licences for Siculo's books, is emblematic not only of the ambivalent stance adopted by some inquisitors, but also of the transient convergence between some sectors of the Benedictines and the Dominicans, not for nothing the two religious orders whose protectors in this period were respectively Pole and Morone.

⁹⁴ "[Siculo] mi fece donare da un monacho di sancto Benedetto un libro composto da lui Giorgio in vulgare, con le authoridadi della Scrittura in latino, intitolato con titolo quale non mi ricordo, ma so bene che lo chiamava il Libro grande". Severi added that the monk "stava a San Benedetto di Mantova, chiamato don Benedetto Fontanino". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 270.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

⁹⁶ "Complice di Giorgio, perché avea libri di quello, i quali traslatò di volgare in latino, *De iustificatione* e il *Libro grande*. Approvò la visione di quello per buona, magnificava la dottrina e la persuase anche a me, parlando seco alcune volte in vita di Giorgio". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 430, note 12 (my italics).

As far as Girolamo Papino is concerned, though, his parallel allegiance to the interests of the duke of Ferrara, as well as the necessity to safeguard his own reputation, resulted in a dangerous short circuit that is closely related to the mysterious violent death of Giorgio Siculo. Whereas, ten years earlier, political expediency had induced the inquisitor of Ferrara to spare Camillo Renato a death sentence (thus accommodating, perhaps, the needs of Ercole II d'Este, who was already troubled by the Calvinist connections of his wife Renée of France),⁹⁷ analogous considerations led Papino to take diametrically opposite decisions in the case of the other Sicilian heretical monk, Giorgio Rioli. To a large degree, this different outcome depended on the greater number of people to whom the past associations with Siculo could be a source of serious embarrassment, not least because their names began to come out through the polemical works of Calvinist Italian exiles like Pier Paolo Vergerio, Francesco Negri and Giulio della Rovere. The atmosphere was particularly tense in Ferrara: here, before being captured, Siculo had presumably come into contact with leading exponents of the local Anabaptist communities through the good offices of his disciple Pietro Bresciani. In 1550 Bresciani was a guest of Camillo Orsini, a Roman knight and friend of Pole's, with whom he shared similar doctrinal beliefs.⁹⁸ Ercole II's attempt to prevent any scandal in his duchy must have played a part, therefore, in the prolongation of Siculo's custody in Ferrara, where his trial eventually took place, despite the Holy Office's determination that he should be transferred to Rome.

The monk's death did not allay entirely Ercole II's concerns, which surfaced again six years later, in 1557. On 18 February, as soon as he was informed that Girolamo Papino had died, the duke instructed his secretary to immediately search the inquisitor's cell for "all the pieces of writing dealing with Lutheranism and aimed both at the gentlemen [in the circle] of our consort, the Most illustrious Madam, and at any other in our state". The secretary was to collect these documents for safekeeping, "above all that book of the Sicilian fra Giorgio who was hanged in Ferrara, if it is there".⁹⁹ In truth, "fra Giorgio" was not hanged in public, and

⁹⁷ See Eleonora Belligni, *Renata di Francia (1510-1575). Un'eresia di corte* (Torino: Utet, 2011).

⁹⁸ See Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, pp. 196-198, 209-210. On Camillo Orsini, see Giampiero Brunelli's entry in *D.B.I.*, LXXIX.

⁹⁹ "Havendo noi inteso [...] la morte del padre Papino, havemo voluto dirvi, colla presente, che subito al ricevere di essa ve ne dobbiate andare alla sua cella et levarne tutte le scritture che parlano in materia di lutheranismo alli gentil huomini sì di Madama illustrissima nostra consorte, come d'ogni altro del stato nostro; levando sopra il tutto quel libro di frate Giorgio Siciliano che fu impiccato a Ferrara, se vi sarà. Et in somma vediate di trovar tutte quelle scritture che pertengono et a predetta Madama nostra consorte et ad altri, traendole

the inaccuracy in the duke's letter might not be incidental. Strangely enough for a staunch advocate of Nicodemism, on 30 March 1551 Siculo had allegedly reconsidered at the last moment his earlier decision to abjure.¹⁰⁰ Possibly in an attempt to pry as much information as possible out of the Benedictine, his execution was postponed for no apparent reason, only to take place in secret, on the night of 23 May. In violation of the procedural rules, Giorgio Siculo was strangled in his cell, without so much as "either a comforter or the usual chance, as the others are given, to make his confession and defer to God. And this" (according to the register of the institution that assisted condemned prisoners in their last hours) occurred "with the consent" – if not through the active participation –¹⁰¹ of a person who had everything to gain, at that point, from Siculo's death and from his consequent silence on the identity of friends, backers and accomplices in high places: that man was "the inquisitor of Saint Dominic", Girolamo Papino.¹⁰²

3.1. *Silvestro Meucci's Publishing Campaign: Sources and Contributors*

Leandro Alberti's edition of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, published in Bologna in 1515, has proved to be a valuable point of entry into two sectors of the Dominicans and the Benedictines that shared, to a considerable extent, the *spirituali's* attitudes towards religious dissent. Along with their protectors, Morone and Pole, these groups actually came into contact with some of the most radical heterodox circles, sometimes supporting them in a veiled manner or turning a blind eye, as was acrimoniously pointed out by Pier Paolo Vergerio, in relation to the publication licences obtained by Giorgio Siculo: "You are indeed, oh Dominican friars, the ones that favour, support and defend this man and this false opinion".¹⁰³

presso voi sotto buona custodia". Quoted in Prosperi, 'Girolamo Papino e Bernardino Ochino', p. 107.

¹⁰⁰ See Prosperi, *L'eresia del Libro Grande*, p. 233.

¹⁰¹ On this hypothesis, see Firpo, *La presa di potere*, chapter IV (pp. 167-202).

¹⁰² "A dì 23 maggio 1551 fu apicato a hor tre di notte uno don Giorgio Ceciliano per heretico et luterano il quale, quando morse, non ci fu né confortatori né manco il solito, come alli altri si fa, né di confesarsi et remetersi a Dio. Et questo con il consenso del inquisitore di S. Domenico. Il resto a Iddio fu rimesso". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 19 (from the register of the Company of Justice of Ferrara).

¹⁰³ "Et voi appunto, o frati dominicani, siete quegli che questo huomo et questa openione falsa favorite, sostentate et difendete". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 212 (from Vergerio's pamphlet, published in 1550, *A quegli venerabili Padri dominicani, che difendono il rosario per cosa buona*).

Not only did Siculo temporarily represent, with his peculiar prophetic doctrine, a point of convergence between the different ideological positions and strategies of the two aforementioned groups, but he also acted, in a way, as a bridgehead for the spread of the religious message that lay at the heart of Pole's ecclesiology and conception of reform. In this regard, it is highly significant that the English cardinal, in whose opinion the renewal of the Church would be fulfilled through the eschatological agency of the Angelic Pope, embraced the visionary ideas of a man that was "regarded by someone [...] as the second angel of the Apocalypse".¹⁰⁴ By discreetly backing the Sicilian monk, if not steering some of his moves, Pole essentially added the prophetic medium to the set of channels through which he was at the same time undertaking and promoting an untheorised reform.

The Venetian editions of Joachim's works in their turn will be the key to casting light on a different constellation. Although less directly related to Pole, the people involved in Meucci's publishing campaign contributed to propagating or revising the myth of the *pastor angelicus* in ways that exerted an oblique influence on Pole's personal approach to this prophetic tradition. The book that, on 5 April 1516, inaugurated the series of Joachimist editions was printed by Lazzaro de' Soardi and contained a variety of prophetic works, all of which erroneously ascribed to Joachim of Fiore.¹⁰⁵ Like the spurious *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, throughout the Middle Ages these prognostications had been much more popular than the authentic writings of the Calabrian abbot, on account of their more explicit references to contemporary events and their frequent recourse to *post eventum* vaticinations.¹⁰⁶ The opening work of the 1516 anthology is a patchwork of different texts, namely a pseudo-Joachimist commentary on the *Oraculum Cyrilli* and its interpretation, the so-called *Libellus de causis, statu, cognitione ac fine praesentis schismatis et tribulationum futurarum* [*Pamphlet on the Causes, State, Knowledge and End of the Present Schisms and the Future Tribulations*], allegedly composed by the mysterious XIV-century hermit Telesphorus of Cosenza.¹⁰⁷ In the 1516 edition, a number of pictures complement these texts, which are

¹⁰⁴ "Questo vostro siciliano, tenuto d'alcuni (o gofferia!) per quel secondo angelo dell'Apocalipsi". Quoted *ibid.*, p. 214.

¹⁰⁵ *Expositio magni prophetae Ioachim in librum beati Cirilli de magnis tribulationibus et statu Sanctae Matris Ecclesiae*. A few months later, this edition was published again in Venice by Bernardino Benagli.

¹⁰⁶ See Bernard McGinn, 'Circoli gioachimiti veneziani (1450-1530)', *Cristianesimo nella storia*, 7 (1986), pp. 19-39 (31-32).

¹⁰⁷ On Telesphorus's *Libellus*, see Paola Guerrini, 'Escatologia e gioachimismo in Telesforo da Cosenza', in Fabio Troncarelli (ed.), *Il ricordo del futuro. Gioacchino da Fiore e il gioachimismo attraverso la storia* (Bari:

followed by John of Paris's *De Antichristo* [*On the Antichrist*] and by the *Tractatus de septem statibus Ecclesiae* [*Treatise on the Seven States of The Church*], written by the Franciscan spiritual Ubertino of Casale.

The material for Silvestro Meucci's volume was taken from two manuscript versions of a prophetic anthology dating back to the mid-XV century and compiled by a Dominican friar from Brescia, Rusticiano, at the request of the Venetian patrician Domenico Morosini, a prophecy buff and an avid collector of Joachimist works.¹⁰⁸ In the foreword to the 1589 edition of the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, Pasqualino Regiselmano (who seemed to be well acquainted with Venetian gentlemen that were keen on prophetism)¹⁰⁹ claimed to have seen two manuscripts that had belonged to Morosini's library,¹¹⁰ namely a copy of the papal *Vaticinia* and another medieval prophecy with pseudo-Joachimist additions, the *Vaticinium Sybillae Erithreae*,¹¹¹ which the Venetian nobleman had translated from Greek into Latin. What Rusticiano was asked to organise was precisely the collection of prophetic texts contained in a "big and unsystematic" volume of Morosini's, as the Dominican friar wrote in his prefatory letter around 1455.¹¹² The core of Rusticiano's compilation was the *Libellus* of Telesphorus of Cosenza, preceded by one of the numerous short prophecies attributed to saint Bridget of Sweden. The collection also included the legend of the second Charlemagne ("Karolus filius Karoli"), i.e. the saviour who was believed to appear in the Last Days to reform the Church and the Empire, and the aforementioned treatise *De antichristo* of Jean Quidort.¹¹³

Mario Adda, 2006), pp. 125-132.

¹⁰⁸ On Domenico Morosini, see Claudio Finzi's entry in *D.B.I.*, LXXVII.

¹⁰⁹ See above, pp. 186-187.

¹¹⁰ "Ad nos scripta quaedam allata sunt, abhinc centum et triginta annos a quodam Dominico Mauroceno nobili viro Veneto patritio satis docto et exacti ingenii composita, in quibus non Abbati nec Anselmo, sed Rabano cuidam [...] tribuuntur haec *Vaticinia* [...]. Prestantissimum illud *Vaticinium Erythrae Sybillae* extabit, Graecis ad Troianam expeditionem proficiscentibus depromptum, res usque ad saeculi finem futuras praedicentis, antea quoque typis editum, verum imperfectum mutilumque, a Graeca in Latinam linguam a nobili illo Veneto, cuius supra meminimus, versum". *Vaticinia*, ed. Regiselmano, pp. b2[r]-[b2v].

¹¹¹ The *Vaticinium Sybillae Erithreae* is published in Oswald Holder-Egger, 'Italienische Prophetieen des 13. Jahrhunderts', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere Deutsche Geschichtskunde*, I version: 15 (1890), pp. 143-178 (155-173); II version: 30 (1905), pp. 323-386 (328-335). The most recent edition is Christian Jostmann, 'Sibilla Erithea Babilonica. Papsttum und Prophetie im 13. Jahrhundert', *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Schriften*, 54 (2006), pp.

¹¹² "Novas prophetias, a te nuper oblatas, vidi atque revolvi. Et quia magnum erat volumen atque confusum, hortatus es ut in brevi decerperem ordinaremque quae digna viderentur". Quoted in Rusconi, 'Ex quodam antiquissimo libello', p. 456.

¹¹³ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 538-539.

At present, Rusticiano's work only survives in a manuscript copy (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, *Lat.* III, 177) that constituted one of the two sources of the 1516 printed edition. The copyist was a monk of the Benedictine abbey of San Cipriano in Murano, a certain Andrea, who produced this manuscript in 1469, "eight years before his death", as reported in an annotation that attests his integrity, prudence and good reputation. This note was added to the manuscript in 1495 on the instructions of the abbot of San Cipriano, Vittore Trevisan,¹¹⁴ who belonged to a distinguished aristocratic family and headed the abbey from 1458 until 1502. Like many other members of the Venetian patriciate, Trevisan was not immune from the charm of prophetism: at San Cipriano, indeed, he boosted the collection and transcription of apocalyptic texts, many of which were appended to the same volume that contains Rusticiano's collection.¹¹⁵

For the purpose of this chapter, it is interesting to note that the lost exemplar from which the monk Andrea copied this miscellany was kept in another Venetian Benedictine house, the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore, one of the places Pole frequented most often between his return to Italy in 1532 and his departure for Rome, following his appointment to the cardinalate in 1536. In the peaceful gardens of San Giorgio, Pole would spend much time with scholars, clergymen and patricians that used to meet there, among whom the newly appointed abbot Gregorio Cortese, Benedetto Fontanini, Gasparo Contarini, Marcantonio Flaminio, Alvise Priuli, the Florentine Antonio Brucioli, who would later join the court of Renée of France in Ferrara, the geographer Ramusio and the Apulian merchant Donato Rullo, a future member of both Juan de Valdés's circle in Naples and Pole's Viterbese sodality. In San Giorgio Maggiore, Pole arguably had the opportunity to read the prophetic miscellany (maybe corresponding to the original manuscript itself of Rusticiano) that on the one hand served as the exemplar for the copy made by the Benedictine Andrea, and on the other was the source of the book printed in 1516. A note at the end of the *Vaticinium Sybillae Erythraeae* – which was inserted in Meucci's edition (along with other short prophecies), between Quidort's

¹¹⁴ "Millesimo 477 dominus Andreas monachus Sancti Cipriani excessit de hac vita [...], qui ante annos octo defunctionis suae hunc libellum scripsit [sic] manu propria ex exemplari habito a Sancto Georgio Maiori Venetis [...]. Ego dominus Victor Trevisanus, abbas praedicti monasterii, in testem perhibeo per praesentes annotationes d[ominum] Andream fuisse virum integri sensus et prudentiae singularis ac memoriae approbandae [...]. Haec annotatio novissime facta fuit manu fratris Philippi Mediolanensis in die sanctae Scolasticae 1495 in Sancto Cipriano". Quoted in McGinn, 'Circoli gioachimiti veneziani', pp. 24-25, note 23. McGinn erroneously translates "defunctionis" with "trasferimento".

¹¹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 24-28.

treatise *De Antichristo* and Ubertino's *De septem statibus Ecclesiae* – specifies that this text too was “taken from the library of San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice”.¹¹⁶

The publication of Joachimist works was not the solitary endeavour of Silvestro Meucci, whose prefatory letter was directed to two of his closest friends and collaborators in the project: his Augustinian brother Anselmo Botturnio from Castel Goffredo (Mantua) and the lay hermit Bernardino of Parenzo (or Parentino), whom Meucci terms “much venerable, devout, illuminated and ecstatic servant of God”.¹¹⁷ The latter, who was illiterate, started to make a name for himself as a mystic “endowed with prophetic spirit”¹¹⁸ shortly after he and his friend Botturnio met Meucci in the monastery of San Cristoforo della Pace (Murano).¹¹⁹ As a matter of fact, between 1514 and 1515 Bernardino apparently predicted the victory of Marignano. Hence the rapid growth in the number of his sympathisers among the aristocracy, as witnessed by his correspondence with his principal patron, the marquise of Mantua Isabella d'Este, who in turn would notify her son (Federico II) of the latest vaticinations of the hermit. In 1525 Baldassarre Castiglione too acknowledged that the resounding defeat of Francis I in Pavia confirmed Bernardino's prediction (which Castiglione had received from the marquise) of an impending disaster awaiting the French king and his troops.¹²⁰ At the beginning of 1525, in company with Botturnio, Bernardino was in Rome; here he found a sympathetic hearing from pope Clement VII, with whom he had frequent colloquies. On the occasion of the Jubilee, in the same year Pole too made a trip to Rome. Even though, according to Beccadelli's biography, his stay was “very short”, since he “visited only the places sacred to devotion, without appearing at the court of Clement VII”,¹²¹ it is not unlikely that during his

¹¹⁶ “Extracta in bibliotheca [sic] Sancti Georgii Maioris Venetiis”. *Expositio magni prophetae Ioachim*, p. [O2v] (LIVv). The quotations are taken from the second edition (Venice: Bernardino Benagli, 1516).

¹¹⁷ “Plurimum venerando, devoto et illuminato extaticoque Dei famulo Bernardino Parentino”. *Ibid.*, p. A3[r] (Iir). In the second edition, Anselmo Botturnio's response was added after Meucci's letter (see *ibid.*, p. Aiv[r]).

¹¹⁸ “Venerabilis eremita Parentinus, spiritum prophetiae habens”. *Ibid.*, p. F2[r] (XXIIr).

¹¹⁹ For the following information on Bernardino of Parenzo, see Maria Pia Billanovich, ‘Una miniera di epigrafi e di antichità. Il Chiostro di S. Giustina a Padova’, *Italia medioevale e umanistica*, 13 (1969), pp. 197-292 (209-219).

¹²⁰ See Sanudo, *I diarii*, XXXV, coll. 67-69.

¹²¹ “In Roma [...] non dimorò molto, ma visitati li luoghi santi, senza farsi vedere nella corte del papa, ch'allora era Clemente VII, se ne tornò a riveder la patria”. Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, p. 283. The English translation is taken from Benjamin Pye's edition of Beccadelli's biography: *The Life of Cardinal Reginald Pole, Written Originally in Italian by Lodovico Beccadelli, Archbishop of Ragusa, and Now First Translated Into English* (London: C. Bathurst, 1766), pp. 19-20.

Roman sojourn Pole met Bernardino Parenzo (and perhaps Botturnio as well), or at least heard of him.

There exists a more evident link between Anselmo Botturnio and Pole in that one of Botturnio's patrons, Bartolomeo Stella from Brescia, entered the household of the English cardinal, at whose service he would remain until his own death in Dillingen, on 6 September 1554. A Latin ode composed by Botturnio in honour of Stella (*Oceano Titan signando*) figures among the surviving papers of the latter,¹²² who came into contact with Pole when the Englishman went to Rome, in December 1536, to receive the red hat.¹²³ Stella had got there two years ahead, when he had been appointed protonotary apostolic. By this time he had virtually severed his friendly relations (which dated back to his first Roman sojourn, between 1517 and 1520) with Gaetano of Thiene and the Roman group of the Oratory of Divine Love. Like Marcantonio Flaminio, who had also associated with them in the 1520s, Stella started to gravitate instead towards Gian Matteo Giberti's circle of collaborators in Verona and, above all, towards Pole and his sodality in Viterbo, where Pietro Carnesecchi met him in 1541. From that time forward, Stella remained in Pole's train and witnessed the following stages of his ecclesiastical career: the inauguration of the Council of Trent (where he also acted as intermediary between Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuit fathers at the Council); the conclave of 1549-1550, of which he wrote an account in his capacity as Pole's conclavist,¹²⁴ and the legatine mission of 1553-1554, when the English cardinal vainly attempted to negotiate a peace between Charles V and Henry II.

Before Pole met Bartolomeo Stella, he and Anselmo Botturnio were differently involved in the English monarchy's campaign to enlist support for Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon. Whereas Pole, in October 1529, went to Paris for the purpose of winning the Sorbonne's theologians over, in the subsequent year Botturnio was approached by Richard Croke, an emissary of Henry VIII, about the king's Great Matter, although he refused to

¹²² Giuseppe Bonelli, 'Un archivio privato del Cinquecento. Le carte Stella', *Archivio storico lombardo*, 34 (1907), pp. 332-386 (380, n. 384).

¹²³ The only biography of Bartolomeo Stella is in Antonio Cistellini, *Figure della riforma pretridentina*. Stefania Quinzani, Angela Merici, Laura Mignani, Bartolomeo Stella, Francesco Cabrini, Francesco Santabona, prefazione di Paolo Guerrini. Brescia: Morcelliana, 1979 (I ed.: 1948), pp. 56-103, in particular p. 69 ff. See also the biographical note in *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 516, note 41.

¹²⁴ See Thomas F. Mayer and Peter E. Starenko, 'An Unknown Diary of Julius III's Conclave by Bartolomeo Stella, a Servant of Cardinal Pole', *Annuario historiae conciliorum*, 24 (1992), pp. 345-375.

pronounce himself in favour of the divorce.¹²⁵ The person that recommended the English emissary to sound out Botturnio was the Venetian Minorite Francesco Zorzi, whose undisputed prestige as an erudite scholar had immediately impressed Richard Croke, a philologist and theologian that corresponded with other leading European intellectuals such as Erasmus and Reuchlin.¹²⁶ In 1525, the publication of Zorzi's *De harmonia mundi* [*On Universal Harmony*], which was based on an eclectic synthesis of kabbalistic speculation, biblical exegesis, astrological notions and Platonic, Pythagorean and Hermetic doctrines, had aroused much interest in the philosophical and religious circles that combined Scriptural hermeneutics with the study of the sources of Jewish spirituality.

Many of these Christian kabbalists were also connected to the same coteries with which Pole associated at the time of his first Paduan sojourn. This was the case, for instance, with the versatile scholar Giulio Camillo (known as Delminio), who was a member of the literary circles that gravitated towards Pietro Bembo. During the same period, Giulio Camillo had friendly relations with Marcantonio Flaminio, whose knowledge of rabbinical exegesis (the fruit of his associations not only with Camillo, but also with some of his disciples as well as other specialists in Hebraic studies) manifests itself in his prose paraphrase of the Psalms.¹²⁷ Written in Viterbo and published in Venice in 1545, this work reveals a close affinity with Pole's commentary on the Psalms. It must be observed, in addition, that both Pole and Flaminio, together with Priuli, Contarini and other members of bishop Giberti's circle in Verona, attended the series of Biblical lectures delivered by the Hebraist Johann van Kampen over the winter of 1535-1536, when Pole was working on his *De unitate*. The Flemish scholar, a former professor at the Collegium Trilingue of Leuven, went to Italy in 1533 for the purpose of meeting the Jewish erudite Elia Levita, who had settled in Venice following the Sack of Rome. In the Vatican city, Levita had enjoyed the patronage of the prior general of the Augustinians, Egidio of Viterbo, to whom he taught Hebrew. At the request of the newly

¹²⁵ See Adriano Prosperi's entry ('Botturnio, Anselmo') in *D.B.I.*, XIII.

¹²⁶ See Cesare Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione. Studi sulla cultura del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Napoli: Morano, 1974), pp. 184-185.

¹²⁷ See the edition published by Paolo Manuzio in 1564: *Marci Antonii Flaminii in librum Psalmorum brevis explanatio atque, in eorum aliquot, paraphrases luculentissimae. His adiecimus alias eiusdem in Psalmos triginta paraphrases, carmine conscriptas ac suo loco positas* (Venice: [Paolo Manuzio], 1564). Here the prose paraphrase is followed by the poetic version of thirty Psalms, published separately by Vincenzo Valgrisi in 1546.

appointed cardinal, moreover, Levita undertook the transcription and translation of numerous Hebrew manuscripts, many of which concerning the Kabbalah.

3.2. Paolo Angelo and the Custodians/Re-Inventors of the Apocalypsis Nova

Egidio of Viterbo was the dedicatee of the last of Silvestro Meucci's Joachimist editions. The volume, published in 1527, included the *Expositio in Apocalypsim* and the *Psalterium decem cordarum*. In the first lines of the dedicatory epistle, Meucci proudly revealed that some years earlier, on the occasion of Egidio's stay in Venice, the cardinal had been pleased to read the Joachimist editions published until then. Egidio had therefore encouraged Meucci to go ahead with the project, recommending in particular that he put into print Joachim's exposition of the *Apocalypse*.¹²⁸ The episode mentioned by Meucci must have happened in 1519, when Egidio, following the conclusion of his Spanish legation, stopped at Venice before betting to Rome. His sojourn coincided with the publication of the first authentic work of Joachim, the *Liber concordiae novi ac veteris Testamenti*, which was printed on 13 April by Simone of Lovere.

This book had been preceded by the edition of two famous pseudo-Joachimist works, both put into print by Lazzaro de' Soardi: the *Scriptum super Hieremiam*, published in 1516, and the *Scriptum super Esaiam*, which came out the following year, with the addition of a series of pseudo-Joachimist illustrations. On 20 November 1525, the former was reprinted by Bernardino Benagli with a new prefatory letter of Meucci, who dedicated this edition to the priest Paolo Angelo, a member of an Albanian family that, on account of the Turkish invasion, had relocated to Venice. Here the Angelo family had tried to maintain their prestige by boasting about the links between one of their members (another Paolo Angelo, archbishop of Durrës between 1460 and 1469) and Skanderbeg (of whom the priest Paolo Angelo wrote an anonymous biography)¹²⁹, as well as by emphasising their descent from the noble Angelos

¹²⁸ "A me petiit sibi quaedam opuscula abbatis Ioachim quae mei cura impressa audierat. Quibus allatis perlectisque aliquantisper non parum delectata est. Sibique rem mirum immodum gratam me facturum si alia eiusdem auctoris opera, et prae caeteris super Apocalypsi, excudenda cura rem hortata est". *Expositio in Apocalypsim*, p. [A1v].

¹²⁹ *Commentario de le cose de' turchi et del s[ignor] Georgio Scanderbeg, principe di Epyrro, con la sua vita et le vittorie per lui fatte, con l'aiuto de l'altissimo Dio, et le inestimabili forze et virtù di quello degne di memoria*,

dynasty.¹³⁰ Thus Paolo the priest never failed to stress that his lineage included “the ancient Byzantine emperors”,¹³¹ as he did for example in his book *In Sathan ruinam tyrannidis*, which was published in Venice in 1524. This prophetic miscellany impressed Meucci to the extent that he decided to dedicate his second edition of the *Super Hieremiam* to Paolo Angelo without even knowing him personally.¹³² *In Sathan ruinam tyrannidis* consisted of a peculiar combination of Angelo’s letters to three popes (Leo X, Adrian VI and the reigning Clement VII), some prophetic dialogues between God and Angelo himself, who presented himself as “the Angel of the Fifth Seal”,¹³³ and other scattered apocalyptic texts, among which his Italian translation of the “prophecy of the Minorite friar Amadeus [...], who saw that man chosen by the omnipotent God, through whom the Maker will renew his Church”.¹³⁴

The work from which Angelo took this excerpt was the *Apocalypsis nova*, traditionally ascribed to the blessed Amadeus (Amadeo Menes de Silva, otherwise known as “Amedeus Hispanus”), the Iberian Minorite that, over the course of the thirty years he had spent in Italy, between 1452 and 1482, had made a name for himself as a visionary and thaumaturgist. As founder of a reformed Franciscan community (the Amadeites), he had enjoyed the protection of pope Sixtus IV (Francesco della Rovere, the former minister general of the Franciscan order), who wanted him in Rome as his own confessor.¹³⁵ The popularity of the *Apocalypsis nova* – with which Amadeus’s name is associated, although the text was certainly interpolated after his death – rested precisely on the sections of the work where the archangel Gabriel enlightens Amadeus on the figure of the Angelic Pastor, chosen by God himself and appointed “over his Church” to “lead all men back into the one bosom”.¹³⁶ Beside merging

1539. Cf. Alessandro Laporta’s edition: *La Vita di Scanderbeg di Paolo Angelo (Venezia, 1539). Un libro anonimo restituito al suo autore* (Galatina: Congedo, 2004).

¹³⁰ See Giampaolo Tognetti, ‘Note sul profetismo nel Rinascimento e la letteratura relativa’, *Bullettino dell’istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo* 82 (1970), pp. 129-157 (150-154).

¹³¹ “De stirpe olim antiquiorum imperatorum Bizantinorum”. Quoted in François Secret, ‘Paulus Angelus descendant des empereurs de Byzance et la prophétie du Pape Angélique’, *Rinascimento*, 2 (1962), pp. 211-224 (212).

¹³² In his dedicatory letter, Meucci wrote: “Ego igitur tibi prorsus ignotus tu mihi facie quidem ignotus; animo vero (qui verus est et interior homo) mihi factus nuper notissimus”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 215.

¹³³ McGinn, ‘Circoli gioachimiti veneziani’, p. 36.

¹³⁴ “Prophetia fratris Amadei ordinis Minorum de observantia reformatorisque, qui vidit iam illum hominem ab omnipotente Deo electum, quo mediante opifex summus renovabit Ecclesiam suam”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 216. Angelo’s Italian version of this prophecy is published *ibid.*, pp. 216-220.

¹³⁵ On Amadeus de Menes Silva and the bibliography concerning him, see Grado Giovanni Merlo’s entry in *D.B.I.*, LXXIII.

¹³⁶ Quoted in Anna Morisi-Guerra, ‘The *Apocalypsis Nova*: a Plan for Reform’, in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 27-50 (30).

“the western Church with the eastern in a perpetual union”, this pope would “devote himself to spiritual things and appoint one of the cardinals to attend the temporal affairs. In this way, universal peace” and “reformation” would be achieved, thus perfectly fulfilling “the will of God”.¹³⁷

The traditional eschatological corollaries of the myth of the *pastor angelicus* are complemented in the *Apocalypsis nova* by the underscoring of this figure’s marked inclination towards spiritual matters, a feature that is echoed in Pole’s conception of the role of the Angelic Pope within his ecclesiology and in connection with the reform process he had in mind. The prediction of the blessed Amadeus in all likelihood was not unfamiliar to him: in fact, the excerpt published by Paolo Angelo in 1524 contributed to a new upsurge in the popularity of this text, which had nourished, and would continue to nurture, the expectations of the *pastor angelicus* in some ecclesiastic circles. As late as in the 1540s, Guillaume Postel observed that “the book of the said Spanish Amadeus is in the hands of the household or the posterity of most cardinals and of many Romans that have lived until the time of pope Farnese [Paul III] and that, by means of the aforementioned prophecy of Amadeus, have resolved to accomplish the Angelic Papacy”.¹³⁸

Those that first fell under the spell of Amadeus’s prediction were the very prelates and religious that, at the beginning of the XVI century, gave the initial impulse to the circulation of the *Apocalypsis nova*, whose original text was reworked and interpolated by some of them. According to the Bosnian Minorite Juraj Dragišić (alias Giorgio Benigno Salviati), the sealed book of Amadeus had been “held by Sixtus [IV], and later by Innocent [VIII], but neither of them, however, had been courageous enough to open it”, given that “certain friars”¹³⁹ had paid with their life for the violation of the archangel Gabriel’s ban on “opening the book until God will decide otherwise”.¹⁴⁰ In 1502, possibly on Easter day, the manuscript was allegedly

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

¹³⁸ “Le livre dudict Amodeus espagnol se trouve en la famille ou postérité de la plupart des cardinaux et de beaucoup de Romains qui iusques au temps de pape Farnese ont vescu, et moyennant ladicte prophétie d’Amodeus se sont promis le Papat Angelike”. Quoted in Secret, ‘Paulus Angelus’, p. 211.

¹³⁹ Quoted in Aldo Landi, ‘Prophecy at the Time of the Council of Pisa (1511-1513)’, in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 53-61 (58).

¹⁴⁰ “Lassa questa imagine insieme con lo libro a Roma. Et commanda da parte de Dio, sotto pena de la morte, che niuno aprisca il libro, fino che piacerà al Signore, acioché a poco a poco a luce le cose abscondite et secrete de Dio. Ma se alcuno haverà presumptione de aprir el libro ananti quel tempo, darà le debite pene”. Secret, ‘Paulus Angelus’, p. 220.

unsealed in San Pietro in Montorio by Giorgio Benigno himself, who acted on the instructions of the protector of the Amadeite congregation, cardinal Bernardino López de Carvajal, and with the approval of Egidio Delfini, the general of the Minorites. Subsequently, the book remained in the exclusive custody of Carvajal and, for a limited period, of Giorgio Benigno too, who probably played the most important part in the reworking of the *Apocalypsis nova*.¹⁴¹

Whereas Benigno's self-identification with the Angelic Pope, or at least with one of the cardinals that would assist him to fulfil his providential mission, can be accepted as a reasonable hypothesis, there is no shadow of doubt that Carvajal nursed an ambition to be acknowledged as the *pastor angelicus*. His hope of becoming the long-awaited reformist pope constituted a major component of the leading role he assumed during the conflict that led to the Pisan Council in 1511.¹⁴² The myth of the Angelic Pope continued to exert a considerable fascination on another promoter of that schismatic Council, the Benedictine abbot Zaccaria Ferreri. In his *Plea for the Reformation of the Church (De reformatione Ecclesiae suasoria)*, written in August 1522 to celebrate the arrival in Italy of the newly-elected pope Adrian VI, Ferreri consequently underscored the characteristic link between the widespread prophetic expectations and the need to reform the Church:

We have surely been awaiting for a long time – in order to restore this mystical Jerusalem which threatens to fall into ruin, worn and eroded by its ancientness – the coming of the angelic Pontiff. Is it you the one who is about to come, or are we waiting for someone else?¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ See Morisi-Guerra, 'The *Apocalypsis Nova*', pp. 44-50; cf. Landi, 'Prophecy at the Time of the Council of Pisa', pp. 58-61. On Giorgio Benigno and his role in the reworking and circulation of the *Apocalypsis nova*, see Vasoli, *Profezia e ragione*, pp. 17-127, in particular pp. 83-109, 121-127; see also Id., 'Giorgio Benigno Salviati (Dragišić)', in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 121-156 (139-153).

¹⁴² See Nelson H Minnich, 'The Role of Prophecy in the Career of the Enigmatic Bernardino López de Carvajal', in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 111-120.

¹⁴³ "Expectamus quippe diu pro instauranda Hierusalem hac mystica, quae sua vetustate attrita et corrosa ruinam minatur, angelicum Pontificem adventurum. Tu es qui venturus est, an alium expectamus?". Zaccaria Ferreri, *De reformatione Ecclesiae. Suasoria* (Venice: Giovanni Antonio Nicolini of Sabbio and brothers, 1522), p. [A3 v]. This work was dated 31 August 1522, although it was published only one year later. For the English translation I have availed myself of Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio*, p. 23 (see also pp. 24-25).

3.3. *The Papal Prophecies of Pietro Galatino and the Eclectic Triad*

By the time Ferreri wrote his *De reformatione Ecclesiae suasoria*, the myth of the Angelic Pope had started to pervade the eschatological speculation of the Apulian Minorite Pietro Colonna, better known as Galatino, who considered himself to be the heir to Giorgio Benigno's exegetical work on the *Apocalypsis nova*.¹⁴⁴ For his part, Benigno praised Galatino's knowledge not only of Latin, Greek and Hebrew, but also of the Ethiopian language.¹⁴⁵ A man of wide interests, Galatino associated with the group of scholars led by cardinal Egidio of Viterbo. It was in this milieu that he was introduced by Elia Levita to the study of the Kabbalah, which led to the publication of his *De arcanis catholicae veritatis* (Ortona, 1518). The eschatological perspective that emerges in this book tended to dominate Galatino's works of the mid-1520s, a period of remarkable proliferation of prophetic and apocalyptic literature. Against the background of the frantic predictions of a second deluge, which was expected in 1524, as a result of the conjunction of the planets in the sign of Pisces,¹⁴⁶ Silvestro Meucci continued to grind out his Joachimist editions, while one of his companions, Bernardino of Parenzo, made his name as a clairvoyant. Furthermore, on 25 May 1522 the Parisian brothers Jean and Enguilebert de Marnef printed the *Mirabilis liber*, a rich prophetic miscellany that would be re-edited many times. Among the texts contained in this volume – which aimed to demonstrate that all vaticinations converged towards the coming of the Angelic Pope, in conjunction with French rule over the whole world – figured the *Vaticinia de summis pontificibus*, the Sibyl's prophecy, the popular *Prognosticatio* of the German astrologer Johannes Lichtenberg (first printed in 1488), Savonarola's *Revelationes* and a series of oracles attributed to St. Catherine of Siena, St. Vincent Ferrer and Jean de Roquetaillade.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ See Roberto Rusconi, 'An Angelic Pope Before the Sack of Rome', in Reeves, *Prophetic Rome*, pp. 157-187 (170-171).

¹⁴⁵ See Carlo Colombero's entry on Pietro Colonna in *DBI*, XXVII.

¹⁴⁶ On the expectations of a second deluge see Niccoli, *Profeti e popolo*, pp. 185-216, and Paola Zambelli, 'Fine del mondo o inizio della propaganda? Astrologia, filosofia della storia e propaganda politico-religiosa nel dibattito sulla congiunzione del 1524', in *Scienze, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura*, Convegno internazionale di studi, Firenze, 26-30 giugno (Firenze: Olschki, 1982), pp. 291-368.

¹⁴⁷ On the *Mirabilis liber*, its contents and its numerous editions, see Jennifer Britnell and Derek Stubbs, 'The *Mirabilis Liber*: Its Compilation and Influence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), pp. 126-149.

Pietro Galatino's prophetic compilations of the mid-1520s did not depart from the traditional link between eschatological conjectures and speculation about the need and the way to reform the Church. The latter issue, about which Galatino had already written a short pamphlet in 1521,¹⁴⁸ gave the stimulus for the composition of three books that (like most of Galatino's works) remained unpublished: *De Ecclesia destituta*, *De Ecclesia restituta* and, later on, *De Ecclesia instituta*. By means of the interpretation of medieval prophecies, as well as through the "mystical explanation" of several passages from the Psalms, the major prophets, the gospels and the *Apocalypse*, this trilogy dealt firstly with the state of moral decay and *deformatio* of the ecclesiastical institution (*De Ecclesia destituta*); secondly, it provided the outlines of a religious reform, which consisted in restoring the Church to its original condition (*De Ecclesia restituta*). For this reason the third and last book, which was written in the second half of the 1530s, elaborated on the foundation of the Church and its millenarian history.¹⁴⁹ Galatino's juxtaposition between the *deformatio* and the *reformatio* of the ecclesiastical institution is paralleled, both at a conceptual and at a lexical level, in Pole's *De reformatione*, where the exposition of his conception of reform is constructed on the same binomial:

The term reformation – Pole explains – indicates a preceding deformity, as well as a shape that departs from the original one, determined by God [...]. Therefore, when we speak of reformation, we speak of the way to restore the Church, corrupted and deformed by men, to that shape in which God first established it.¹⁵⁰

Like Pole, Galatino ascribed a primary role to "the Angelic Pastor, sent by God Himself" to effect "the true reformation", that is to say to restore the "universal Church" to "its

¹⁴⁸ *Libellus brevissimus de republica Christiana pro vera eiusdem reipublicae reformatione, progressu ac felici ad recuperanda Christianorum loca expeditione*. After the death of pope Leo X (the initial recipient of this work), Galatino dedicated his book to Adrian VI. See Rusconi, 'An Angelic Pope', pp. 175-176.

¹⁴⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 177-182. On this trilogy, see also Giampaolo Tognetti, 'Le fortune della pretesa profezia di san Cataldo', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il Medioevo*, 80 (1968), pp. 273-317 (306-312).

¹⁵⁰ "Reformationis enim nomen praecedentem deformitatem indicat, et formam a prima quam Deus instituit recedentem [...]. Ergo, cum de Ecclesiae reformationem loquimur, de modo loquimur revocandi Ecclesiam, ab hominibus corrupta et deformatam, ad eam formam in qua eam Deus primum instituit". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 1v. See also ff. 1r-3v, 15r-16v.

primitive state”.¹⁵¹ His reflections on this eschatological figure were subsequently gathered into the treatise *De angelico pastore*, which remained among Galatino’s manuscripts, as was the case with two papal prophecies he had allegedly discovered: the *Vaticinium Romanum* and the *Vaticinium Montis Gargani*. The former, supposedly dating back to 1160, purports to predict the popes from Alexander III to Clement VII (followed by the Angelic Pope) and is complemented by Galatino’s explanation (*explicatio*), which suggests in a roundabout way that the Apulian Franciscan was to be the *pastor angelicus*. The text of the latter prophecy, instead, is surrounded in the margin by the names of the pontiffs from Paul II to Clement VII and concludes, once again, with the description of the Angelic Pope. These two vaticinations, of which there is no other copy or attestation before the time of Galatino, were in all likelihood produced, if not by Galatino himself, by some of the scholars or ecclesiastics with whom he associated.¹⁵² To the same (Roman) circles one could perhaps trace the origin of the *Vita angelici papae*, the prophecy in verse that, according to Lorenzo Davidico, preceded the treatise *De reformatione Ecclesiae* in the volume whose frontispiece portrayed Pole as the Angelic Pope. It is interesting to note, in this respect, that the series of popes listed in the *Vaticinium Montis Gargani* covers approximately the same span of the *Vita angelici papae*, which was reportedly composed of “12 verses about every pope over the last hundred years”, showing “the vices of those pontiffs and the virtues of [the cardinal of] England”.¹⁵³

A papal series starting from Paul II also occurs in the famous *Tractatus astrologicus* [*Astrological Treatise*] of Luca Gaurico, published in Venice in 1552. This book contained the natal charts, followed by a short comment of the author, not only of ten pontiffs (until Julius III),¹⁵⁴ but also of kings, princes, emperors, scholars and artists, as well as of important cities. A renowned astrologer that was held in high esteem both in the Roman curia and in the Protestant universities (in 1532 Melancthon dedicated his preface to Camerarius’s *Norica* to him),¹⁵⁵ Gaurico was present in Venice between 1524 and 1526, when Pole sojourned in Padua and Silvestro Meucci prepared his last Joachimist editions. Besides introducing the

¹⁵¹ Quoted in Rusconi, ‘An Angelic Pope’, pp. 179, 180.

¹⁵² See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 442, note 5, 445. Cf. Rusconi, ‘An Angelic Pope’, pp. 158-162.

¹⁵³ See above, p. 136.

¹⁵⁴ Luca Gaurico, *Tractatus astrologicus in quo agitur de praeteritis multorum hominum accidentibus per proprias eorum genituras ad unguem examinatis* (Venice: Curzio Troiano Navò, 1552), pp. 15v-22r.

¹⁵⁵ See Cesare Vasoli, ‘L’astrologia a Ferrara tra la metà del Quattrocento e la metà del Cinquecento’, in *Il Rinascimento nelle corti padane. Società e cultura* (Bari: De Donato, 1977), pp. 469-494 (488-489).

duchess of Ferrara, Renée of France, to the royal science of the stars, he became the favourite astrologer of Paul III, who asked him to select the right moment to lay the foundation stone of the new basilica of Saint Peter.¹⁵⁶

At the time when Luca Gaurico's *Tractatus astrologicus* came out, Joachimist echoes and prophetic speculations about the advent of the Angelic Pope continued to resound in the Serenissima, especially through the works of two men – Guillaume Postel and Giacomo Brocardo – whose susceptibility to medieval prophetism was part of an elaborate system of thought based on a blend of hermetic philosophy, Kabbalah, alchemy and knowledge of the sacred languages. Both these scholars drew on Joachim of Fiore's theology of history and believed it was Venice's eschatological destiny to be the hub of universal reform and the Heavenly Jerusalem. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the mosaics in “the mysterious church of Saint Mark”, traditionally ascribed to the Calabrian abbot, held a particular fascination for Guillaume Postel,¹⁵⁷ who also devoted considerable thought to the figure of the *pastor angelicus*. An avid reader of Galatino's works and of the *Apocalypsis nova*, Postel was convinced he had been chosen by God as instrument of the ultimate renewal or, to put it another way, as the very Angelic Pope.¹⁵⁸ The development of his ideas was strongly influenced by the teachings of the Venetian visionary known as Mother Giovanna, whom he termed “the Venetian Virgin” (the title of a book he dedicated to her memory in 1555),¹⁵⁹ as well as *Mater mundi* [“Mother of the world”] and “new Eve”.¹⁶⁰ Regarded as the female Angelic Pope or even the feminine Christ, Mother Giovanna was the dedicatee of another work by Postel, *Les très merveilleuses victoires des femmes du Nouveau Monde* [*The Really Marvellous Victories of the Women of the New World*]. It is worth pointing out that, in the

¹⁵⁶ On Paul III's great interest in astrology and his predilection for Luca Gaurico, see Alessandro Menghini and Felicita Menghini Di Biagio, *Paolo III. Pillole e profezie. Astrologia e medicina alla corte papale del Cinquecento* (Perugia: AMP, 2004), pp. 145-162, in particular pp. 146-154 on Gaurico.

¹⁵⁷ “L'abbé Joachim [...] ordona les peintures en entailleures de la très mystérieuse église de Saint Marc”. Guillaume Postel, *Le Trésor des prophéties de l'univers*, manuscrit publié avec une introduction et des notes par François Secret (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), p. 248.

¹⁵⁸ See Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio*, pp. 217-218.

¹⁵⁹ Guillaume Postel, *Le prime nove del altro mondo, cioè l'admirabile historia, et non meno necessaria et utile da esser letta et intesa da ogniuno, che stupenda intitulata La Vergine venetiana* (Venice: appresso del autore, 1555).

¹⁶⁰ See Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 479-481; Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio*, pp. 114-119. On Postel, see also Marion Leathers Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel, Prophet of the Restitution of All Things: His Life and Thought* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); François Secret, *Postel revisité. Nouvelles recherches sur Guillaume Postel et son milieu* (Paris: S.E.H.A., 1998); Yvonne Petry, *Gender, Kabbalah and the Reformation: the Mystical Theology of Guillaume Postel (1510-1581)* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

chapter devoted to some “wise women”, Postel professed “great admiration” for a lady whom Pole himself regarded as his “dearest mother in Christ”,¹⁶¹ “the Marquise of Pescara” Vittoria Colonna, “even though some rumour of [her] new opinions – Postel allusively added – has tarnished her reputation”.¹⁶²

Another person very close to the Viterbese group of the *spirituali*, Pietro Carnesecchi, was instead a long-standing friend of Giacomo Brocardo, a native of Pinerolo (Piedmont) whom he had first met in Venice, between 1543 and 1544, and subsequently in Paris, in 1548-1549.¹⁶³ It was presumably at the time of their French sojourn that Brocardo, with the help of Carnesecchi, could find a publisher for his first book, a paraphrase of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.¹⁶⁴ In the following years, the Piedmontese scholar resided in Venice, where he earned his living as a school teacher and preceptor of some patrician scions.¹⁶⁵ His interests, far from being confined to the arts, ranged over a wide variety of subjects that included prophetism (in particular the Joachimist interpretation of history), astrology, Kabbalah, Gematria, alchemy (which he practised in Paris) and Hermeticism. As a matter of fact, the kind of “mystical and prophetic interpretation” he would later apply to some books of the Bible was rooted in the peculiar fusion of Hermeticism, Kabbalah and alchemy which had been theorised, for instance, by Francesco Zorzi and Giulio Camillo Delminio.¹⁶⁶ The latter had become a close friend of Brocardo when the young Piedmontese first went to Paris, between the late 1520s and the early 1530s. In 1533 they met again in Venice, where Delminio, as was mentioned

¹⁶¹ Pole, *Epistolae*, III, p. 14.

¹⁶² “J’ay en grande admiration la Marchesa di Pescara, combien que quelque renommée de nouvelles opinions luy ont dénigré la bonne estime”. Guillaume Postel, *Les très merveilleuses victoires des femmes du Nouveau Monde, et comment elles doibvent à tout le monde par raison commander, et même à ceulx qui auront la monarchie du Monde Vieil* (Paris: Jehan Ruelle, 1553), p. 16.

¹⁶³ “Dico dunque di havere cognosciuto prima in Venetia dell’anno 1543 et 1544 et poi in Francia nel 1548 et ’49 uno Giacomo Brocardo piemontese, il quale è homo di lettere humane per professione, ma per inclinatione ancora studioso della Sacra Scrittura”. *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/3, p. 1231 (fourth *confessio* of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, c. 13 August 1567).

¹⁶⁴ See Antonio Rotondò’s entry on (‘Brocardo, Iacopo’) in *DBI*, XIV (1972).

¹⁶⁵ On 14 May 1568, at the beginning of his Inquisition trial in Venice, Brocardo declared: “Ho nome Giacomo Brocardo, piemontese di Pinerolo, et son mastro da schola di littere humane, et sono da 35 anni in circa che io habito in questa terra et sono stato in casa di diversi nobili”. Quoted in Elisabetta Lurgo, ‘«Nouveau Saint Paul» ou «trompette de Satan»? Le prophète Iacopo Brocardo. I-Enfance et formation’. *Revue d’Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 92 (2012), pp. 445-463 [henceforward: Lurgo, ‘Brocardo I’] (446, note 3). See also *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/3, p. 1232.

¹⁶⁶ See Elisabetta Lurgo, ‘«Nouveau Saint Paul» ou «trompette de Satan»? Le prophète Iacopo Brocardo. II-Les écrits et leur réception’, *Revue d’Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses* 93 (2013), pp. 203-221 [henceforward: Lurgo, ‘Brocardo II’] (204).

earlier, associated with the same groups towards which Pole and Flaminio gravitated during these years.

It was through the “books and studies of prophecy” that Brocardo, by his own admission, had discovered “the darkness and errors” that existed within the Church (“even with respect to doctrine”) and “would continue to exist” until its “renovation”.¹⁶⁷ Thus, as in the case of Postel, Brocardo’s eschatological perspective was informed by his pronounced eclecticism, inasmuch as the ultimate fulfilment of his prophecies essentially consisted in the expansion of the Church until its complete identity with humankind.¹⁶⁸ In this respect, there are important points of similarity between this outlook and Pole’s conception of reform, which was permeated by an eschatological attitude and rested, on the one hand, upon a conceptual transmutation of the Church into a diaphanous all-embracing shell, and on the other upon a deliberate theological fluidity. This elaborate construct was perfectly epitomised by the miniature of the English cardinal as Angelic Pope as well as by the juxtaposition of the prophecy *Vita angelici papae* and Pole’s *De reformatione* in one single volume, which was prepared at a time when Priuli consulted astrologers and soothsayers about his friend’s chances of attaining the papacy.

From the 1550s, however, within the context of a progressive hardening of religious boundaries, the open-minded eclecticism of people like Pole and, to varying degrees, of Postel and Brocardo too, was increasingly ruled out and thwarted on both sides of the Alps. Significantly, all of these men had some trouble with the Holy Office and, after leaving or fleeing Italy, they continued to be regarded as highly controversial figures even in other countries, where the tide seemed to turn against them. Guillaume Postel was found insane, rather than heretic, and spent four years in the Inquisition prisons, until the death of pope Paul IV in August 1559. The subsequent period of wandering, during which he went on preaching his message, came to an end fourteen years later, when he was confined for life to the Parisian priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs. Giacomo Brocardo was arrested in Venice on 11 May

¹⁶⁷ “Io sono entrato nelli libri et studii della profecia [...]. Per queste cose che ho vedute in materia delle profetie ho tenuto che nella Chiesa vi siano delle tenebre et degli errori *etiam* quanto alla dottrina et che ce ne siano per essere fino alla renovatione della Chiesa”. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 208, note 33. Cf. the deposition of Vincenzo Giuliani, *ibid.*, note 31.

¹⁶⁸ See Rotondò, ‘Brocardo’, *DBI*, XIV. On Brocardo’s works and prophecies, see Kuntz, *The Anointment of Dionisio*, pp. 119-126; Reeves, *The Influence of Prophecy*, pp. 494-499.

1568 and faced a long trial, but on 30 October he was freed by four armed men.¹⁶⁹ He spent the rest of his life peregrinating around Europe and died poor and neglected, presumably in the last years of the XVI century. His esoteric exegesis of the book of *Genesis*¹⁷⁰ was condemned by the synod of La Rochelle as “full of profanation of the Holy Scripture, impiety and pernicious errors”,¹⁷¹ while in 1586 some French Catholics denounced Brocardo to Henry IV as a “real trumpet of Satan”.¹⁷² As for Reginald Pole, not only did his attempt to restore Catholicism in England encountered predictable resistance within the reign, but it was also hampered by Paul IV’s anti-imperial and anti-heretical campaign, which did not spare the English cardinal. Following the revocation of Pole’s legatine mission, his stay in Britain turned into a de facto self-imposed exile, aimed at avoiding going the same way as his friend Morone, who was imprisoned in Castel Sant’Angelo and tried by the Inquisition. When Pole died, therefore, some of those who had associated with him regretted that he had left, in Pietro Gelido’s words, “a most unfortunate impression”,¹⁷³ being considered (to quote Pietro Carnesecchi)

a Lutheran in Rome and a papist in Germany, and a [pro-]French at the court of Flanders and an imperial at that of France; so that according to me – Carnesecchi paradoxically added, echoed by Gelido – it would have been a great happiness to him to die in that glorious year of Julius [III]’s conclave.¹⁷⁴

Thus, in Carnesecchi and Gelido’s words, the most dismal failure in Pole’s career had become the apogee of his glory, and not without reason: it was precisely after the conclave of

¹⁶⁹ See Lurgo, ‘Brocardo II’, p. 209.

¹⁷⁰ *Mystica et prophetica libri Geneseos interpretatio* (Leiden, 1584).

¹⁷¹ “Rempli de profanations de l’Écriture Sainte, d’impiétés et d’erreurs très pernicieuses”. Quoted in Lurgo ‘Brocardo I’, p. 446.

¹⁷² “Vraye trompette de Satan”. Quoted *ibid.*

¹⁷³ “[Ha] lassato una memoria di sé infelicissima secundum utrumque hominem, et beato lui se moriva poco doppo il conclave di Iulio terzo. Alla Chiesa romana è morto lutherano et ai lutherani è morto papista (come dicono loro): et così interviene a chi non cammina in verità et in semplicità di cuore”. Quoted in *Processo Morone* (old edition), V, p. 406, note 2 (letter of Pietro Gelido to Cosimo de Medici; 15 February 1559). On Pietro Gelido, see Guido Dall’Olio’s entry in *DBI*, LIII; *Processo Morone*, NE, I, pp. 209-211, note 15.

¹⁷⁴ “Mi pare bene che quel signore sia stato molto infelice nella sua morte quanto al mondo, essendo restato in opinione a Roma di luterano et in Alemagna di papista, et in corte di Fiandra franzese et in quella di Francia imperiale, di maniera che secondo me saria stata gran felicità la sua a morire in quell’anno così glorioso del conclave di Giulio” (Carnesecchi to Giulia Gonzaga; Venice, 13 February 1559), *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/2, p. 492 (XLVIII questioning of Pietro Carnesecchi; Rome, 18 November 1566).

1549-1550 that the *cardinalis Anglicus*, along with his closest friends, had definitively reached the certainty that he was the prophesied *pastor angelicus*, chosen by God to lead and restore his spiritual Church.

CONCLUSIONS

Coming Full Circle: The Other Time and Other Spaces of Pole's Utopia

This study, whose purpose was to examine the contents and the development of Pole's programme of reform, especially as expressed in the numerous versions of his *De reformatione Ecclesiae*, has come up against an unwritten "reform through other means". As a matter of fact, rather than giving its outlines in an explicit programme, Pole tried to implement it de facto by recourse to the same channels through which it was promoted, namely printing, preaching and pastoral activity, not forgetting prophecy, which can be considered a fourth medium in itself, given its tremendous impact on Pole's way of furthering Church renewal. Ironically, I have found that the most effective representation of his invisible undeclared reform, which originated in a peculiar vision of the Church and of the role he was to play in this process, was the frontispiece of a volume whose existence is only hypothetical.

In the early 1990s, the historian who first drew attention on Davidico's Inquisition trial observed that his revelations about this book (which presumably included Pole's *De reformatione* and the prophecy of his angelic papacy) pointed to "a new and maybe unexpected aspect of the *spirituali*'s religious orientations", that is to say

their secret awareness of being members (and even leaders) of an elitist Church of the chosen ones, a Church embedded within the very ecclesiastical institution, though possessing a privileged enlightenment that ensured access to more authentic truths, as well as to profounder levels of religious knowledge. The spiritualism of Pole and his group was therefore connected not only and not so much to the Reformed doctrines (which constituted, though, an essential point of reference), but rather to more ancient heterodox roots, nurtured in turn by tenacious prophetic traditions that in the first decades of the century were still very much alive, although by this time [the early 1550s] they were blurred and regarded with growing suspicion.¹

¹ "Esso rivela un aspetto nuovo e forse inatteso degli orientamenti religiosi dei cosiddetti "spirituali", mettendone in evidenza la segreta consapevolezza di sentirsi membri (e addirittura capi) di una ristretta Chiesa degli eletti, incapsulata all'interno dell'istituzione ecclesiastica ma detentrica di un'illuminazione privilegiata tale da garantire ad essa l'accesso a più autentiche verità, a più riposti livelli di conoscenza religiosa. Uno spiritualismo che si ricollegava dunque non solo e non tanto alle dottrine riformate, che pure ne costituivano un

Regrettably, these acute observations have fallen so far on deaf ears, since scholars have continued to overlook the “ancient heterodox roots” of Pole and the *spirituali*’s religious orientations, as well as the “tenacious prophetic traditions” that nurtured them. A survey of the scholarly works produced between the 1990s and 2014 shows that Erasmian Humanism, on the one hand, and Valdesianism, on the other, are still assumed to be the boundaries of Pole’s intellectual and doctrinal horizon.² As a consequence, he is presented either as a “Protestantising Catholic”, an advocate of the moderate “third way” (succeeding Gasparo Contarini as leader of this curial wing), or as the main exponent of a more radical movement that gradually detached itself from Contarini and, largely under the inspiration of some disciples of Juan de Valdés’s, became a hub of attraction for many Italian heterodox groups.

In an attempt to erode these traditional categories, some American scholars (such as Elisabeth Gleason and especially Thomas Mayer) have emphasised the impact of “other kinds of spirituality”, which had their roots in the so-called “pre-Lutheran Paulinism” (*Paolinismo preluterano*) and inspired many other prelates, including those who would later oppose Pole.³ The multiplication of the sources that informed Pole’s religiosity parallels, in Mayer, the dilution of the traditional divisions within the sacred college, whose members were part of a single “reform tendency”, that is a continuum embracing the whole variety of approaches to the issue of Church reformation. Curiously enough, Mayer’s yearning for innovation and unconventionality at any cost leads him to a virtual restatement of even older concepts dating back to the 1940s and 1950s.

To his credit, admittedly, Mayer has recognised the importance of the prophetic dimension in the construction of Pole’s identity: in fact, Mayer’s Reginald Pole is characterised as “Prince and Prophet”, to quote the title of his biography. Here, however, the development of this theme is largely unsatisfactory and remains essentially a missed

referente ineludibile, ma a più antiche e complesse matrici eterodosse, a loro volta innervate da tenaci tradizioni profetiche, ancor assai vive nei primi decenni del secolo ma a questa data ormai appannate e guardate con crescente sospetto”. Massimo Firpo, *Nel labirinto del mondo. Lorenzo Davidico tra santi, eretici, inquisitori* (Firenze: Olschki, 1992), pp. 112-113.

² See my article ‘Reginald Pole tra Erasmo e Valdés’.

³ See Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 9, 68-69. The category of *Paolinismo preluterano* (and not “*Paulinismo*”, as Mayer incorrectly writes more than once) is borrowed from Roberto Cessi’s 1957 article ‘*Paolinismo preluterano*’, *Atti della Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Rendiconti. Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, s. 8, 12 (1957), pp. 3-30.

opportunity. The occasional remarks on Pole's prophetic inclination are entirely confined to the personal and psychological sphere; accordingly, his susceptibility to prophecy is depicted as the result of his own vicissitudes as well as a major component of his self-fashioning. This approach has two main downsides, inasmuch as it is pursued in a sort of historical vacuum, both in terms of breadth and depth. Firstly, by focusing almost exclusively on Pole's penchant for creating a prophetic persona, and by attributing this disposition to the emotional upheaval that accompanied his conflict with Henry VIII and his failure at the 1549-1550 conclave, it neglects the particular context where Pole developed his interests, which were significantly stimulated by the prophetic fervour he encountered in the Republic of Venice since the time of his first trip to Italy. Secondly, the by now commonplace references to Pole's identification with the figure of the Angelic Pope touch lazily on the Joachimist origins of this myth (and this concerns not only Mayer, but Pole scholars in general), thus losing sight of some fundamental corollaries that emerged in the course of its age-long development and found an echo in Pole's ecclesiology and conception of reform.

As regards the first point, in Chapter VII I have shown that at the time of his first stay in Italy (between 1521 and 1526) Pole came across, whether directly or indirectly, both with people involved in the publication of all the known works by Joachim of Fiore and with scholars and visionaries that gave prominence to the myth of the *pastor angelicus* within a multifaceted framework encompassing Kabbalah, Hermeticism, astrology and alchemy. Pole's predicament on the occasion of the later conflict with Henry VIII would merely heighten, therefore, interests and attitudes that began taking shape in his formative years. In my thesis, I have highlighted especially the stimuli he received from the heterogeneous constellation which he intersected in the Republic of Venice during the first half of the 1520s, but further research on his early years in England could yield fruitful results too. It was around the indelible imprint left by these stimuli that other influences found their place within Pole's cultural and religious horizon. There can be no doubt, in this respect, that he regarded Erasmus as a major point of reference, or that his association with the Benedictines was a source of religious inspiration; likewise, the evolution of his doctrinal views following his encounter with the teachings of Juan de Valdés (through the mediation of Marcantonio Flaminio) is clearly detectable in his works since the early 1540s. These experiences did not

supersede Pole's earlier fascination with the prophetic tradition, which actually remained a linchpin of an eclectic system of thought.

For this reason one can claim that no conversion in the strict sense of the word ever took place in Pole's life, insofar as there was no clear-cut turning point in his intellectual and religious trajectory, but rather a steady accumulation of different (and sometimes contradictory) elements around a kernel that had formed previously. This is why, for instance, Pole did not adhere to Valdés's ideas with the enthusiasm of a neophyte, as was the case instead with his friend Giovanni Morone, who was "seduced from the Catholic into the Lutheran doctrine by Flaminio, with the most reverend cardinal Pole's approval".⁴ From the point of view of the latter, Flaminio's proselytism did not amount to a sudden enlightenment; on the contrary, by virtue of his past experiences and his tendency to avoid definitive choices, Pole always maintained a certain degree of detachment and circumspection, which often puzzled his interlocutors by leaving them "in suspense".⁵ The cardinal's intellectual autonomy and relative independence from Flaminio is the only tiny fragment of truth one could discern (if one really has to see one) in the otherwise heavily biased story which Pole told Carafa in 1553 (a version echoed by Morone, in the *Confessio* he wrote in jail, and by Beccadelli, in the biography of the English cardinal)⁶ to justify his association with Flaminio, whom he reportedly took in at his Viterbese palace for the mere purpose of rescuing him from heresy.⁷

Admittedly, Pole's religious trajectory was therefore less discontinuous than usually assumed by late XX century historians, although not in the way Mayer means when claiming that Pole, like Vittoria Colonna, "did not then [in the early 1540s] need conversion".⁸ According to him,

far from the ambiguous, ambivalent, even confused figure of most recent historiography, even a 'Hamlet', Pole laid out his basic theological positions in *De unitate* and refused to back

⁴ "Sua Signoria reverendissima [Morone] fu sedotta dalla dottrina catholica nella lutherana mediante il Flaminio, con l'approbatione del reverendissimo cardinal Polo". *Processo Morone*, NE, I, p. 231 (deposition of Giovan Battista Scotti; Bologna, 25-28 luglio 1555).

⁵ "Delle cose di Dio Sua Signoria [...] parlava mirabilmente, di modo che mi faceva stare suspeso". Ibid., p. 396 (deposition of Angelo Cattani; Rome 24 April 1557).

⁶ For Morone's version, see *ibid.*, p. 425. For Beccadelli's one, see Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 326-327.

⁷ See Morandi, *Monumenti*, I/2, pp. 349-350. According to Mayer, these versions "deserve credence" anyway. Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 118; see pp. 116 and ff.

⁸ Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 105.

down on any significant point thereafter, including the necessity of justification by faith. He did, however, drift in the direction of a steadily more mystical religion, which may have appealed to him as a solution to the problem of authority .

Even if Mayer himself acknowledges that “both points may amount to endorsing the constant Pole of hagiographical tradition”, he argues that “steadiness of ideas” did not correspond to “steadiness of existence”.⁹

As can be seen from the passage above, the continuity in Pole's beliefs is, in Mayer's eyes, essentially theological. In this respect, though, it must be noted that, when dealing with the question of when Pole started to believe in justification by faith (alone), the American historian seems to go by a rather foggy notion of this doctrine. Whereas, right from the beginning, he tries to cover his back by confessing that his book “is not so much about theology as a technical subject”, but rather “about what might be called the political history of religion and the role of ideas within it”,¹⁰ he tends to disregard important doctrinal nuances of the XVI-century debate on justification. Hence his peremptory statement that, “as a solidly Pauline concept”, *sola fide* “is anything but distinctively Lutheran and was well known in what were to become Pole's Italian and English circles, long before Luther became prominent”¹¹. What a modern reader might consider in fact pointless niceties would make instead all the difference at a time when the Church was slowly beginning to redefine doctrinal boundaries in order to cope with the upheaval triggered by Luther's protest. Overlooking these subtleties means precluding the comprehension of the reasons why for decades so many theologians, as well as people of all social conditions throughout Europe, kept on arguing heatedly over the issue of justification by faith alone (where the last word is an appendage Mayer leaves out too often). It also implies that one can not detect any doctrinal divergence between Pole and Contarini in 1541-1542. It entails, again, being unable to understand, what exactly the bone of contention was in the correspondence “on the matter of justification” [“in materia della giustificazione”] between Flaminio and Priuli, given that they shared virtually the same opinion on this question, as one might think after a superficial reading of their letters. It comes as no surprise that Mayer skates around this correspondence.

⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mayer, ‘Cardinal Pole's Concept of *Reformatio*’, p. 76.

Why, after all, would Flaminio approach Pole's closest friend to "instil in him the new opinions he [Flaminio] had formed on this matter through his association with Valdés",¹² if Pole himself – so Mayer says – had already "come to hold the central tenets assigned to Valdés some years before coming to Viterbo"?¹³ To put it another way, one wonders what "new opinions" on justification Flaminio could instil in Priuli if both of them, along with Pole, had already familiarised with the concept of *iustitia ex fide* (substantially embracing this doctrine, in Mayer's eyes) during the 1530s, when they associated with the Benedictines in the Serenissima and attended together the biblical lectures of Johann van Kampen, the Flemish Hebraist whose commentary on Paul's epistles to the Romans and the Galatians (Venice, 1534) first introduced "a scientific definition of the expression *benefit of Christ*" to Italy, according to Simoncelli.¹⁴

It is evident that the approach pursued by Mayer – seemingly more inclined to hunt for keywords, if not buzzwords,¹⁵ rather than to examine scrupulously their various shades of meaning and their context – leads him to depict, on the one hand, a much broader consensus around justification by faith alone than was the case in the middle decades of the XVI century. On the other hand, he backdates Pole's acceptance of this doctrine to the early 1530s, thus agreeing with the Franciscan confessor of Philip II, Bernardo de Fresneda (one of the cardinal's fiercest opponents at the time of his last legatine mission to England), who "thought *De unitate* was about justification by faith".¹⁶ As I have tried to demonstrate in my previous studies, as well as in this dissertation, the alleged continuity in Pole's theological convictions is belied by a careful comparative analysis of *De unitate* and other subsequent manuscript works, such as his commentaries on the Psalms and the numerous versions of *De reformatione*. This kind of analysis reveals that, contrary to what Mayer maintains, the most marked change within Pole's religious trajectory pertained precisely to his soteriological

¹² *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/3, p. 1042. See above, p. 98.

¹³ Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, p. 117.

¹⁴ "Nel *Commentariolus in duas quidem D. Pauli epistolas* [...] possiamo incontrare[,] e per la prima volta in ambiente italiano, una definizione scientifica dell'espressione *beneficio di Cristo*". Simoncelli, *Evangelismo italiano*, p. 66.

¹⁵ Besides justification by faith, the list of these buzzwords includes "benefit of Christ", spiritual illumination, *consolatio*, experience, dissimulation. Their mere occurrence in Pole's early writings (or in the works by the people with whom he associated in the 1530s) is enough for him to conclude that Pole's theological system was virtually complete by the time he wrote his *De unitate*.

¹⁶ Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 28-29.

views, which developed radically under the impact of Valdesian teachings. To be precise, his encounter with these ideas did not amount to the sudden discovery of justification by faith alone or of any other specific postulate. Rather than peculiar doctrinal contents, in Valdés's works he found a flexible theological framework; to quote the Spaniard, it was "not doctrine, but shape of doctrine".¹⁷ It was this aspect – which perfectly suited Pole's disposition to carve out some room for manoeuvre – that finally led him to have no scruples about adhering with conviction to the doctrine of *iustitia ex sola fide*. Whereas he was no doubt familiar with this concept, until that moment he had always had reservations about it, so much so that he had limited himself to following Contarini's footsteps with respect to theological positions. One might say that, as far as Pole was concerned (but this was the case with many other people in Italy) the Valdesian teachings opened the floodgates to the acceptance of a cornerstone of Protestant theology without precluding allegiance to the Church of Rome.

It was not so much justification by faith alone Pole was ready to embrace, by virtue of his previous experiences and stock of knowledge, but rather some of the most radical inferences ("illationi", to quote Carnesecchi)¹⁸ which Valdés and his disciples had drawn from this principle, especially those concerning ecclesiology. What leads to this conclusion is a dive into the historical depths of the Joachimist tradition within which the myth of the *pastor angelicus* developed before reaching Pole, namely when he first came upon the wave of prophetic enthusiasm in Venice; and I here I move on to my second point of criticism about the commonplace references to Pole's identification with the Angelic Pope: exactly their lack of historical depth.

Instead of dragging in vacuous generalities like the "steadily more mystical religion" towards which Pole drifted progressively, or the "apocalyptic attitude in his late years",¹⁹ it would be more fruitful to scrutinise the set of corollaries that had been accumulating for

¹⁷ "Según san Pablo, la Santa Escritura vieja es doctrina [...]; el Evangelio no es doctrina, sino forma de doctrina, en cuanto no se entiende por scienza, sino por esperienza". Valdés, *Romanos*, p. 282.

¹⁸ *Processi Carnesecchi*, II/1, p. 144.

¹⁹ Mayer, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 7, 354. In Mayer's opinion, "it seems likely that Pole's apocalypticism, the major change in the *Apology* [to Charles V] from *De unitate*, arose in the same way and at the same time as its central image of the Antichrist, through the catalyst of Pole's experience in Florence in the winter of 1538". Ibid., p. 100; see p. 101. In fact, the catalyst for Pole's apocalypticism can be identified with his first stay in the Serenissima (1521-1526), which coincided with the climax of the Joachimist revival. Within the prophetic tradition concerning the Angelic Pope, Pole could already find the image of the Antichrist as the polar opposite of the *pastor angelicus*. The very birth of this dichotomy lies at the root of the first papal prophecies (see above, p. 167).

centuries around the prophetic construct of the *pastor angelicus*, which represented, by general consent, a major source of inspiration for Pole. In this way, it is possible to get valuable insight into Pole's peculiar conception of the Church and the papacy, as well as his very approach to reform. Indeed, as was discussed in Chapter V, it was within the Joachimist (and pseudo-Joachimist) tradition that he could already find the distinction between the Church of Peter, bound up with the second age of history (or age of the Son) and the Church of John (a definition based on the alleged identification of the anonymous "disciple whom Jesus loved" with John the Apostle), which included the spiritual people of the third age, "destined for the freedom of contemplation".²⁰ The two churches did not represent two diachronic stages in the course of the historical development of the Roman Church, but rather (at least in Joachim's eyes, even though it was not always so after him), different qualitative attributes of the one and only eternal "Holy Mother Church", or "spiritual Jerusalem", within which the papacy, even after the spiritual renewal of the third age, remained a fundamental element of continuity.

In the light of the long prophetic tradition that exerted such a profound influence on Pole, one can go back to the starting point of this thesis and look at what might be termed the *longue durée* of calls and bids for reform throughout the history of Christendom from a different perspective. By virtue of their quasi-consubstantiality with the Church itself, these drives for religious reform can be regarded as the fruit of the perception, whether conscious, voiced or not, of the intrinsic contrast between the nucleus of the original message and the inevitable self-assertive tendency of the hierarchical power structure. It is, to put it another way, the opposition between prophecy and tradition, between myth (or better, mythologem, as the central recurrent core of myths) and dogma, or even, to go further, between the original uncaused creating Word and discourse, that is the systematisation of the word.

Whereas, unfortunately, the limits of the present study do not allow me to delve deep into these matters,²¹ here it is appropriate to point out that, when the perception of these dichotomies did not simply result in a break with the ecclesiastical institution, it often led to non-institutional visions of reform inspired by the distinguishing characteristics which have

²⁰ "Electus est ad libertatem contemplationis". *Liber concordiae*, p. 20r.

²¹ For further reflections on myth/dogma and word/discourse, see Francesco Saba Sardi, *Il Natale ha 5000 anni* (Milano-Roma: Bevivino, 2007; I edition: 1958), pp. 5-103; Id., *Dominio. Potere, religione, guerra*. Milano: Bevivino, 2004.

been observed not only in relation to the Joachimist tradition of the Angelic Pope, but also in respect to Pole's positions on the issue of reform. In the first place, the explicit or implicit theorisation of an esoteric "Church of the chosen ones" as a repository of profounder truths, although coexisting with and within the exoteric Church, aimed, on the one hand, to retrieve and preserve the timeless wisdom (which existed and was attainable even "before Christ came in the flesh")²² from the inevitable dogmatic hardening imposed by the ecclesiastical hierarchies. The universal unity and peace, on the other hand, was to be ensured by the very continuity of the exoteric Church, which was intended as the visible institution, even though reduced to an evanescent shell and emptied of its internal structure to become almost all-embracing.

In the second place, the projection of the fulfilment of reform on an eschatological horizon, on account of the providential role ascribed in this process to the Angelic Pope or other similar prophetic figures, tended to restore the ancient conception of time typical of mythical thought as well as of the idea of perennial revelation. Within this oracular time, the two opposite temporal perspectives that informed the ideal of reform (backward looking, insofar as *reformatio* was equated with the restoration of the pristine state of the Church; and forward-looking, in that the horizon of accomplishment was often eschatological) merged into a circular whole, which contrasted with the linearity of human institutions and dogmas.

The incorporation of the ideal of reform into a circular time, where the definitive fulfilment on the Last Day coincided with a return to the original idyllic state, is perfectly rendered in the letter Pole wrote during the summer of 1552 to the bishop of Badajoz, Francisco of Navarre. Pole understood, on the one hand, the bishop's regret about the suspension of the (April 1552): given that the formation of the Church had been awaited "by all pious people since the fall of the first man, for true salvation depends on it", and that the Church itself had "long since strayed not a little" from its original form, Pole could imagine nothing that gave more pleasure to the pious souls than the restoration of that pristine condition.²³ On the other hand, Pole continued, even "in the event that the fruits of the were

²² "Christus, antequam in carne veniret, summam doctrinae suae gentes etiam docuit, quemadmodum iudaeos". BNN, MS. IX.A.14, f. 28r.

²³ "Ut enim ipsa formatione Ecclesiae nihil maiori desiderio iam inde ab ipso casu primi hominis ab omnibus piis expectabatur, quod inde vera omnium salus penderet, sic post formam ei datam, a qua iampridem videtur non parum deflexisse, nihil scio posse piorum animos magis exhilarare quam si illa ad pristinam formam revocetur; contraque nihil maiorem dolorem afferre quam, si spes illis auferatur se tantum boni visuros". Pole,

not brought forth at the time we expected them, one should not think they have slipped away”,²⁴ but rather cherish the hope that, far from being “left unfinished or torn apart”, the “canvas of the reformation, just commenced in the ”, was merely “tucked into Heaven”, whence it would be “let down to you, more firmly and beautifully woven”.²⁵ The “only thing missing to fulfil Church reformation” was therefore this unforeseeable divine intervention, similar to the “heavenly rains” that “make the heart blossom”: in fact, Pole strikingly added, what had been missing until then was “*not doctrine, nor decrees, nor ceremonies, nor, lastly, any other external remedy*”.²⁶

Thus, virtually by Pole’s own admission, this peculiar temporal perspective, imbued with prophetic tones and underpinned by the belief in the coexistence of exoteric and esoteric Church, turned out to be the foundation of Pole’s rather unique attempt at a reform through other means. Far from limiting himself to devising an elaborate theoretical construct, he tried indeed, from the very highest ranks of the ecclesiastical institution, to put into practice an undeclared “reform without the Church”, both in the doctrinal sense, in light of what I have termed his radical eclecticism, and in the institutional one. As a matter of fact, the endeavour to put forward this kind of *reformatio* by means of non-institutional channels (the same through which it was promoted) reveals Pole’s belief that the main site of confrontation over reform, as well as over the reunification of Christendom, would not be the . Plausibly dating back, according to my reconstruction, to the Regensburg colloquies (spring 1541), it was precisely this conviction, rather than an increasing doctrinal divergence, that lay at the root of the latent rift between Pole and Contarini. From the English cardinal’s point of view, it was crucially important to establish facts on the ground as a basis for the imminent debates at the , which would “merely” sanction the positions that had previously managed to gain more ground, in terms both of political support and widespread consensus.

Epistolae, IV, p. 67.

²⁴ “At enim si non eo tempore editi sunt fructus concilii quo a nobis expectabantur, non continuo putandum est amissos esse”. Ibid., p. 69.

²⁵ “Eo etiam iustiore spem afferre debet praeclaram illam reformationis telam, in concilio iam inchoatam, non interruptam esse neque abruptam, sed in Coelum receptam unde vobis, firmius et pulchrius contexta, maiori cum vestra et omnium consolatione demittatur”. Ibid., p. 67.

²⁶ “Haec nimirum sunt caelestes illae pluviae quae non frustra cadunt in terram, sed inebriant et germinare eam faciunt; sunt aquae illae quae solae deesse videbantur ad reformationem Ecclesiae: non enim doctrina defuit, non decreta, non canones, non caeremoniae, non ullum denique externum praesidium”. Ibid., p. 68 (my italics).

This order of priority derived from the hierarchy of importance Pole established in his *De reformatione*, where the “doctrine of the principles of the faith” and the “knowledge of the Word” were identified as the “fundamentum reformationis”. Without this, one could not proceed with the reform of discipline, the most urgent matter to the eyes of the “populus”.²⁷ In the last resort, the distinction between these two different, although connected, approaches to reform (on the one hand the Word, or doctrine, and on the other hand customs) corresponded to nothing less than the differentiation between the esoteric and the exoteric Church. According to Pole, therefore, the reform of discipline in the institutional Church of Peter was to be preceded necessarily by the reinforcement of the “knowledge of the Word” within the “Church of the chosen ones”, which was precisely what Pole and the *spirituali* de facto tried to do outside of the Council of Trent.

No doubt the peculiar temporal perspective of Pole's vision tended to inspire submissiveness rather than resoluteness: he was certainly ready to let things take their course and wait for the proper time, thus conforming to God's will, even though this made his position extremely weak in the immediate future. Nonetheless, he was not as short of political sense as is usually claimed by those who depict him as a loser, if for no other reason than he realised soon that also those who opposed him were indeed convinced the decisive battle for reform was to be fought behind the scenes and with different rules. Whereas this constellation formally acted within the institutional bodies, and with the utmost rigour, they had no hesitation about seizing control of the new congregation of the Holy Office (which was, after all, a creation of Gian Pietro Carafa and the group that supported him) to pursue what they identified as the main objectives of reform: firstly, and almost exclusively, the extirpation of heresy, that is any deviation, in terms of beliefs and practices, from the newly defined rigid boundaries; secondly, and subordinately, the restoration of discipline, at least on paper.²⁸ In this way, not only did they heavily interfere with the deliberations at the , substantially steering its resolutions, but they also ended up monopolising the selection of prelates and even of popes (as Pole's case demonstrates), hampering genuine experiments of reform at diocesan

²⁷ See above, pp. 70-71, 79.

²⁸ On the substantial failure of a moral reform of the clergy's customs, mainly for the reason that this was not the main objective (if at all) of the leading figures in the Roman curia, see Michele Mancino and Giovanni Romeo, *Clero criminale. L'onore della Chiesa e i delitti degli ecclesiastici nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2013).

level and intruding, later on, into matters that were within the scope of other congregations, such as the elaboration of the so-called Tridentine Index.²⁹

Once the increasing pressure from Carafa and his allies, on the one hand, and, on the other, the repeated attacks by the Italian exiles (namely Francesco Negri and Pier Paolo Vergerio) compelled Pole to be on the defensive, his vision of reform seemed to narrow in line with his doctrinal positions. Indeed, the measures he adopted during his last legatine mission to England did not depart either from many other previous experiments of reform at diocesan level or from the Tridentine decrees, inasmuch as they focused entirely on matters “that pertain to the proper ecclesiastical discipline” and to “the integrity both of the clergy and of the people”.³⁰ At the synod of London (1555-1556), Pole consequently took action to regulate the administration of ecclesiastical offices and of the sacraments, as well as to advance the education of the clergy, notably through the institution of seminaries. Furthermore, he emphasised the bishops’ duty to reside in their dioceses, to undertake pastoral visits (as he himself started to do after the synod) and to preach regularly.³¹ Significantly, the decrees also banned “anyone from reading, possessing, printing, importing into this reign, selling, defending and praising (whether publicly or secretly) either heretical books or others that are in any way suspect in faith, without having obtained a licence from the Apostolic See”.³²

Considering that in the same years Pole felt it necessary to expurgate his *De reformatione*, with particular attention to the compromising passages related to the issue of justification and ecclesiology, it is easy to read his prohibition against heretical books as a precautionary attempt to cover his back. By 1557, Carafa’s ferocious anti-heretical campaign had left Pole with very little, if any, room for manoeuvre, thus depriving him of the opportunity to continue spreading the peculiar message that lay at the heart of his approach to reform as its propulsive force. Being based on the combination of diverse elements from disparate sources, this

²⁹ See Fragnito, *La Bibbia al rogo*.

³⁰ “Honestas vitae et cleri et populi et reliqua omnia quae ad rectam Ecclesiae disciplinam spectant”. *Reginaldi Poli, cardinalis amplissimi, liber de concilio, eiusdem de Baptismo Constantini magni imperatoris, reformatio Angliae ex decretis eiusdem* (Venetiis: ex officina Iordani Zileti, 1562), p. 98r.

³¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 94v-128v (*Reformatio Angliae*).

³² “Omnes qui haereticorum libros, seu alias quomodolibet de fide suspectos, non impetrata a Sede Apostolica licentia, legant, aut habeant, aut imprimant, aut in hoc regnum importent, aut vendant, aut publice vel occulte defendant ac laudent, quocunque nomine et praetextu id fecerint, damnamus et anathematizamus, atque ut omnibus poenis contra eos latis puniantur mandamus”. *Ibid.*, p. 99r.

message revolved around an exoteric nucleus of a soteriological nature, which became the real centre of gravity, especially in its emblematic formulation (*The Benefit of Christ*), of the reform-cum-propaganda campaign undertaken by the *spirituali* during the 1540s. The radical conclusions stemming from this core were instead destined for the members of the esoteric “Church of the chosen ones” and communicated, accordingly, through more discrete channels.

The very life blood of Pole's vision for renewing the Church had to be shelved at the moment in which he was forced to make the choice he had tried to defer throughout his life: the choice between either of the conceptions of reform that had by then become mutually exclusive. Opting for discipline at the expense of the living Word was, at that point, the only option left to him, even though it entailed the end of his utopian attempt at reform, at least in the way he had intended it before. To his friends and supporters, the bitter realisation of what they perceived as a defeat was tantamount to the frustration of all hopes. To Pole, the insurmountable difficulties he was experiencing simply meant that time had not yet come for the fulfilment of true reformation: while in the flesh, he would not see the fruits of the efforts he had made, for “God wants them to be temporarily concealed so that, to his greater glory, they will be shown at the right time [...] and recognised by everyone”.³³

³³ “Nos illa spes consolari debet: Deum velle eos ad tempus recondi, ut cum maiori eius gloria suo tempore proferantur, qui vult hoc reformandae Ecclesiae opus, ut est eius proprium, ita cognosci ab omnibus”. Pole, *Epistolae*, IV, p. 69.

[1r] *Reginaldi Poli de reformatione Ecclesiae*

Q. Saepe mihi cogitanti de Ecclesiae reformatione, quae nunc fere omnibus est in ore, et ab optime quoque iampridem flagitatur, cum plurima in mentem veniret de quibus libenter sententiam tuam suscitarer, tum vero nihil maiori disquisitione dignum videbatur, nec quod utilius quaeri posset quam illud sit, quod ad ministros Verbi Dei reformandos pertinet, a quibus cum formandam Ecclesiam suam ipse summus architectus et Dominus noster Jesus Christus initium duxerit, cumque iis iam formatis, tanquam omnia constituta essent, quam ad optimum Ecclesiae statum pertinerent, suam corporalem praesentiam subtraxerit; idem exemplo nobis esse debet. Unde tantum opus ordiri conveniat et manifeste declarat, quasi momenti sit ad universi Ecclesiam corporis reformationem, unius quasi membri quod nomine ministrorum verbi Dei significatur, ad primam suam praeclaram formam a Christo institutam restitutio, ex quo reliqua omnia quae utiliter in hac causa statui possunt pendere videntur. Quod cum ita sit omissis reliquis quaestionibus omnibus, quae in tam gravi et multiplici argumento quod tot capita in se continet, ut quovisque te mentem et cogitationem verteris in magna copia sese offerunt, hoc abs te nunc peto: ut de modo reformandi ministros verbi Dei sententiam tuam exponas, non solum in ea parte quae ad mores pertinet, de quorum reformatione multi libri sunt referti, quam de modo enunciandi et tractandi verbi, de quo et si aliqui scripsere, nihil tamen adhuc ipse legi quod mihi in ea parte plene¹ satisfaceret. Quam maxime scire cupio quo pacto ad illorum formam, qui primi ministri verbi fuere, ii qui nunc in eodem ministerio versantur et ab illa deflexerunt revocari possint, in multis vero multos ab ea declinare, frequenter querelae hominum piorum de iis qui concionatorum apud populum officio funguntur, declarant, et quam necessarium sit hac in re modum quaedam et formam praescribere. Cum vero nulla melior excogitari possit quam ea sit quae a primis verbi ministris atque ab ipso Ecclesiae formatore est tradita, quam illi semper sunt secuti, et in suis scriptis eius vestigia reliquerunt, haec ita abs te nunc explicari cupio, ut sit quemadmodum esse debet exemplar omnibus qui eodem ministerio funguntur. Ad quod verbum suum in populo instituendo confirmare possint si tamen prius dixeris quid de ipsa reformatione Ecclesiae in

¹ e of *plene* added above the line in place of *a of plane*.

genere sentias, quid hoc [1v] tandem sit quod reformationem Ecclesiae esse intelligis, quando autem intelligis Ecclesiae reformari.

R. Reformari quidem vel Ecclesiam vel hominem tunc intelligimus cum ad primae formam pulchritudinem vel singuli homines vel universum Ecclesiae corpus revocat: reformationis enim nomen praecedentem deformitatem indicat, et formam a prima quam Deus instituit recedentem. Quae autem forma a Deo instituta fuit, eam semper et bonam et pulchram fateamur necesse est: omnia enim quaecumque fecit Deus in primo suo ortu – ut inquit Scriptura – erant valde bona²; homines vero ipsi sunt qui hanc bonam a Deo constitutam rerum formam corrumpunt ac destruunt. Ergo, cum de Ecclesiae reformatione loquimur, de modo loquimur revocandi Ecclesiam, ab hominibus corrupta et deformatam, ad eam formam in qua eam Deus primum instituit. Loquimur autem tanquam de domo aliqua a praeclarissimo architecto facta. Talis enim est ipsa Ecclesia, quam multis partibus ruinam minatur, et a pristina illa forma recessit quam primus ille et optimus architectus ei initio dedit, quo eam restitui oportet, quod si fiat, iam reformata erit Ecclesia. A nemine vero id fieri, nec quisquam de ea restituenda recte loqui poterit, qui primam eius formam non cognoverit. “Quis vero est – inquit Aggaeus propheta, de instauratione veteris templi ad suos contribules loquens – quis, inquam, ex vobis est derelictus, qui vidit domum ista in gloria sua prima, et qualem vos videtis hanc nunc? An non ita est quasi non sit in oculis nostris?”³. Quod quidem non minus ab iis qui reformationem Ecclesiae expetunt quaeri potest. An nostrum aliquis derelictus sit, qui viderit eam in gloria sua prima, certe si quis esset, is hoc idem videret quod ille de templo conqueritur, ita eam omnibus partibus deformatam, ut vix prior eius forma cognosci possit, viderit enim eam, ut inquit ille, quasi non esset; qui vero hoc viderit, hic solus et ad loquendum de reformatione et ad modum reformandi ostendendum aptus erit.

Q. Quis tandem est qui Ecclesiae priorem formam et gloriam viderit, ut dicere possit quo pacto haec quam non parum ab ea declinavit ad eam rursus revocari possit?

² *Gen.* 1, 11; cf. *Sir.* 39, 21.

³ *Agg.* 2, 4.

R. Quicumque Christum in gloria, cum his quos eiusdem gloriae participes esse voluit, vidit aut aliis narrantibus qui cum gloria praeditum viderunt, quam formam tum Christus se ostendit intellexit, is Ecclesiae formam recens a Christo constitutam et eius pulchritudinem se vidisse et agnovisse vere dicere potest. Contra autem, qui vidit [2r] aut cognovit Christum in gloria apud homines in medio eorum qui eum prodiderunt, ligarunt, irriserunt et tandem crucifixerunt; qui eum, inquam, in eo statu vidit quem Esaias propheta describit, cum dicit: “Sic inglorius erit inter viros aspectus eius, et forma eius inter filios hominum”⁴, is etiam Ecclesiae deformitatem se vidisse et cognovisse potest affirmare. Haec vero si obscurius dici videantur quo magis examinabuntur, eo clariora et veriora, ut spero, invenientur. Sed nunc, ut in genere ad quaestionem propositam respondeamus atque idem iter repetamus, sic dicimus: qui praesentem Ecclesiae deformitatem, et quo pacto illa a prima sua pulcherrima forma recesserit videre velit, ei ad Christum vel gloria vel ignominia affectu respiciendum esse. Quamquam quidem quod ad deformitatem attinet, nihil opus erit alia exempla praeter nos ipsos quaerere, qui Christi ignominia ad deformitatem nimis expressam in fronte gerimus, utinam gloriam eius ita exprimeremus, verum quia utrumque statum in Christo tanquam in tabula a spiritu sancto depictum habemus, ad illum nunc nobis oculis sunt convertendi, ut intelligamus quanam sit pulchra illa Ecclesiae forma, ad quam respicientes deformitatibus sublatis eiusdem reformationem videre possimus.

Q. Quid tandem est quod dicis quosdam Christum vidisse ea gloria decoratum, in qua clare conspicitur gloria domus Dei, quae est Ecclesia? An quisquam hominum in hac vita Christum in hac gloria vidit eandem exprimere potuit? Paulus quidem apostolus cum dicit se raptum in tertium caelum, ubi Christi gloriam vidit, ne verba quidem invenit, quibus ea quae vidit exprimeret, ac vix de seipso affirmare potuit, utrum ne in corpore, an extra corpus fuerit, cum illa gloriosa de Christo cerneret. Atque hoc quidem ille de seipso scribit. De aliis vero qui Christum in gloria viderint, haud explicata usquam in Scriptura, quod meminerim, mentio habetur, si autem de Christo scriptum est, quamdiu quidem in terris fuit, illum seipsum exinanisse forma servi accepta, ubi tandem videbimus eius gloriosum statum in quo

⁴ Is. 52, 14

pulcherrimus Ecclesiae status describitur, ut ad eius exemplar eam nunc multis partibus deformatam revocare possimus.

R. Christi quidem gloriosus status, cum adhuc in terris versaretur, descriptus est ab evangelistis eo in loco ubi coram illis tribus discipulis ipse Christus transfiguratus legitur, in illa enim gloriosa transfiguratione gloriosus et Ecclesiae status est significatus et expressus.

[2v] **Q.** Quo pacto intelligimus Christum Ecclesiae gloriosum statum, et perfectam illam formam ad quam Ecclesia deformatata semper revocari debeat, in sua transfiguratione expressisse?

R. Hoc quidem pacto, si prius intellexerimus quid in illa transfiguratione tres illi apostoli viderint, qui spectatores fuerunt eius gloriae, quorum unus de hac ipsa loquens, postea scripsit: “Non enim doctas fabulas secuti fecimus vobis Domini nostri Iesu Christi virtutem et praescientiam, sed speculatores facti illius magnitudinis, accipiens enim a Deo patrem honorem et gloriam, voce delapsa ad eum huiuscemodi a magnifica gloria: «Hic est filius meus dilectus in quo mihi bene complacui». Et hanc vocem nos audivimus de caelo allatam cum essemus cum ipso in monte sancto”⁵. Haec quidem Petrus. Quale vero fuerit hoc spectaculum narrant evangelistae cum dicunt Iesum assumpsisse secum Petrum, Iacobum et Ioannem fratrem eius, et duxisse illos in montem excelsum⁶ seorsum, et ita transformatum fuisse coram illis ut facies eius resplenduerit sicut sol, et vestimenta facta sint alba sicut nix et ecce app<, inquit, “visi sunt illis Moyses et Elias cum eo loquentes”, et reliqua quae secuntur⁷. In hac vero gloriosa Christi forma, Ecclesiae formam, ut illa a Christo est aedificata, fuisse expressam intelligimus, sed ne enigmata loqui videamur, sic breviter dicimus, universum Ecclesiae gloriosum statum his duobus contineri, paenitentia scilicet quae revocat a malo et lege quae docet bonum. Nec vero ulla maior Ecclesiae forma in terris videri poterit quam si suos illa filios per paenitentiae verbum ab errore revocatos atque unanimiter

⁵ 2 Pt. 1, 17-18.

⁶ *excelsus* added above the line.

⁷ Cf. Mt. 17, 1-3; Mc. 9, 1-3.

legis observantiae studentes, ostendere poterit, nec sane qui reformationem Ecclesiae quaerunt, quam primum quidem, ut paenitentiam in animis eorum qui peccaverunt deinde vero in omnibus legis divinae studium inducant; qui enim hoc perfecerit, is Ecclesiam reformavit. Verum haec quo pacto ab exemplo transfigurationis Christi dici possint, nondum est manifestum, quaerendum ergo est.

Q. Quo pacto haec reformatio Ecclesiae et eius in terris gloriosus status, qui ex paenitentia et studio divinae legis constat, in exemplo transfigurationis Christi sit significatus et expressus?

R. Si personae ipsorum, quos cum Christo colloquentes in hoc glorioso spectaculo visos fuisse evangelistae tradunt, quales sint paululum examinaverimus quod dixi de reformatione Ecclesiae, per paenitentiam et legis divinae studium, facile patebit. Cum enim duo soli nominentur in hoc spectaculo cum Christo colloquentes, nempe Elias et Moyses, quis non intelligit Eliam paenitentiae praedicatoris typum gerere? Talis enim erat Elias qualis Ioannes Baptista, utpote quem eundem spiritum, Christo ipso testante, didicimus cum Ioannis Baptista [3r] habuisse. De illo enim ipse Christus dixit: “Elias iam venit”⁸, etsi vultis recipere ipse est Elias. Ioannis vero praecipuum munus fuisse paenitentiae praedicationem omnes novimus, et in Moyse legis doctorem expressum agnovimus. Haec autem sunt illa duo munera quibus, ut diximus, universa Ecclesiae reformatio continetur. Nec enim qui in Ecclesia praesunt, alia via aut ratione id perficere poterunt quam paenitentia et legis verbis Christi verbo illustratis, quibus duobus gloriosissimus Ecclesiae status exprimitur Christique facies sole splendorior atque eius vestis nive candidior, hominibus atque angelis reddetur. Verum haec ideo obscura adhuc fortasse videntur, quia breviter dicuntur ideo magis sunt explicanda, primum alet illud.

⁸ Mt. 17, 12.

Q. Quid est quod dicimus paenitentiae et legis doctrina totam reformandam Ecclesiam rationem contineri? An non ante Christi adventum, manente adhuc priore tabernaculo cui serviebant veteris legis sacerdotes, haec duo praedicabuntur? Quid ergo? An tum demum reformari praesentis Ecclesiae statum dicimus, si illa ad exemplum veteris populi correcta fuerit?

R. Hoc quidem minime dicimus, et tamen illud asseverare non dubitamus nil spetiosius veteri synagoga illis temporibus quibus illa floruit in oculis hominum videri potuisse, ut merito de ea tum dici potuerit quod de iudaeis dixit Moyses: “Quae est gens tam inclyta ut habeat leges, iudicia et ceremonias sibi?”⁹. Verum nos non tale exemplar quaerimus ad quod reformari praesens Ecclesiae status possit, sed hoc dicimus, qualiscumque fuerit illa gloria et pulchritudo veteris populi, qua nulla certe in terris tum pulchrior ostendi potuit et ad eam pulchritudinem perveniret, ne verbi paenitentiae et legis effectum esse. Idem vero de praesenti Ecclesia dicimus, si aliqua ex parte suam pulchritudinem perdidit, extra parte eam perdidisse qua filii eius verbum paenitentiae et legis negligentius audierunt, quam si recuperare velit¹⁰ eadem diligentius ei auscultanda atque amplectenda. Verum quatenus cum illo verbo conveniunt, quod materiam colloqui dedit Eliae et Moysi cum Christo quando visi sunt in maiestate cum eo de excessu eius loquentes. Verbum enim excessus Christi revelatum id fuit, quod lucem attulit verbo Eliae at Mosis, atque eos adeo splendere fecit, idem autem faciet in corpore universae Ecclesiae cum illud receperit. In veteri autem synagoga licet verbum paenitentiae et legis id fuerit quod illi et lucem et gloriam addidit. Tamen quia verbum excessus Christi nondum expresse revelatum fuerat, sed tantummodo revelandum expectabatur, umbram potius gloriosi status quam veram gloriam ei addidit, nec ullam perfectam reformationem attulit, [3v] quia vero novi populi, ac novae Ecclesiae status a revelatione huius verbi initium duxit, quod paenitentiae et legis verbum secum adduxit. Ideo qui haec tria verba Christi fide coniuncta complectitur, is praeclarum illud verbum retinet quod Ecclesiae primam formam dedit, qua nulla unquam pulchrior in terris est visa. Haec autem est de qua nunc quaerimus, ut ad eius exemplar praesens Ecclesiae status, quae non parum ab ea degeneravit, rursus conformetur. Hoc enim est quod Ecclesia per verbum reformationem appellamus. Hanc vero primi illi conspexere, qui primi spectatores Christi

⁹ Dt. 4, 8.

¹⁰ Followed by *ea d* crossed out.

gloriae fuere, quando cum Moyse et Elia ipse Christus transfiguratus est et locutus, et eandem postea in seipsis expressere, hanc etiam videbunt et in se expressam habebunt quicumque oculos ab Elia et Mose avertentes, utcumque gloriosi appareant, ad Christum, qui est fons¹¹ gloriae, aspicient. Quod ut primi spectatores gloriae Christi facerent, Dominus Deus praetermissa mentione Moysis et Eliae, sic eos admonuit cum diceret: “Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui; ipsum audite”¹². Omnis enim qui Christum audit, Eliam et Moysem audit. Non autem contra, qui Moysem et Eliam audit, is Christum audit, etiamsi illi mandata Christi enuntient. Quare ad Christi verbum illi aures erigendae erunt, qui initium pulchritudinis Ecclesiae et eius perfectam videre cupit.

Q. Quam tandem differentiam intelligimus esse inter verbum Eliae et Moysi et verbum ipsius Christi, an non Moysem et Eliam audire est Christum audire, quam ex spiritu Christi, atque etiam ex eius mandato sunt locuti?

R. Moysem¹³ quidem et Eliam Christi servos fuisse, et ex eius spiritu et mandato locutus esse, negare non possumus. Verum cum separatim eorum verba audiuntur, non explicato Christi verbo, et si fortassis prima specie videntur pulcherrimam et pacatam Ecclesiae faciem ostendere apud eos qui Christi verbum nondum audierunt, nihil tamen revera pacatum locuntur, nequam ullam solidam reformationem, sed depictam et umbratilem, potius afferunt, qualis illa erat, quae facta est in populo Israel ante Christi vocem, ex ipsius proprio ore auditam. Sic enim scriptum est de veteri synagoga, cuius reformatores erant Moyses et Elias: “Vitis pampinosa Israel”¹⁴, foliis magis abundans quam fructibus. Et ideo nihil quod serio contemplanti iucunditatem aliquam afferret animis auditorum, quae autem terrorem multa, vel potius omnia, in eorum verbis continebantur. Id quod Paulus apostolus non dubitat affirmare, cum suum verbi ministerium cum Mosis ministerium comparans, ausus est Moysem ministrum irae Dei et condemnationis appellare¹⁵. De seipso autem, ac de reliquis apostolis

¹¹ *fons* added above the line.

¹² *Mt.* 17, 5; *Lc.* 9, 35; *2 Pt.* 1, 17; cf. *Mt.* 3, 17.

¹³ Followed by *q* crossed out.

¹⁴ Cf. *Os.* 10, 1.

¹⁵ See *2 Cor.* 3, 17.

qui ab ipso Christo verbum reformationis acceperant, [4r] perpetuo clamat laetissimi nuntii, praecones se esse illius nempe verbi ministros, per quod spiritus et vita hominibus daretur, et quo instituebatur primum Ecclesia, tanquam sponsa ornata viro suo, ea forma praedita qua nil pulchrius excogitari potest. De hoc ergo verbo nunc quaerendum est nobis quale sit, si quo modo Ecclesia initio formata fuerit scire, vel quomodo deformata ad primam formam rursus revocari possit. Intelligere volumus huius enim spectaculi cupidis Deus pater dixit: “Hic est filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi bene complacui; ipsum audite”¹⁶. Quae vero ab eo audienda sunt ipse Christus enarrabit, qui autem eius dictis fidem habebunt, hi soli gloriam eius et Ecclesiae videbunt.

Q. An de omnibus Christi verbis hoc dicimus, qui illa auscultat et fidem eis habet, eum Christi gloriam et sponsae eius gloriosam formam visurum? An vero praecipuum aliquod verbum fuit, quod caeterorum eius verborum fundamentum sit, cui qui¹⁷ credit, is iam portam apertam habeat ad spectandam gloriam Christi et eius, quam sibi ascivit, sponsae Ecclesiae?

R. Omnibus et singulis Christi dictis fides certa est habenda, qui numquam sua verba locutus est ut ipse de se fatetur, sed semper Patris, quamvis si sua loqueretur, nihil non salutarem et verum loqui posset cum sit ipsa veritas et salus ipsa. Verum non omnia eius verba sane vim habent ut eis credentes ad hoc¹⁸ gloriosum eius spectaculum adducant, sed illud tantum verbum quod in auribus hominum minorem caeteris omnibus, vel potius nullum applausum sed magnam absurditatem fient, et a quo humanae aures maxime abhorrent, in se continere videtur. Idem vero est quod viam aperit ad contemplandam Dei sapientiam, quodque pulcherrimam Ecclesiae formam, in qua primum est fundata, nobis explicat. Est autem illud verbum quod in Christi transfiguratione Lucas evangelista dicit Eliae et Mosi, cum Christo in maiestate visis, loquendi materiam dedisse: “De excessu enim eius – inquit – loquebantur, quem completurus erat Hierosolymis”¹⁹. Excessus vero verbum crucis verbum est, quo nil humanis auribus absurdius sonat, praesertim si dicamus per eius verbi fidem salutem et

¹⁶ Mt. 17, 5; Lc. 9, 35; 2 Pt. 1, 17; cf. Mt. 3, 17.

¹⁷ Followed by a letter crossed out.

¹⁸ *hoc* added above the line.

¹⁹ Lc. 9, 31.

gloriam consequi posse. Est autem hoc verbum fundamentum omnium verborum Christi, quod absconditum a saeculis et generationibus apostolos fuisse dicit²⁰, idemque a Christo primum revelatum, de quo Esaias propheta ait, sub persona Dei loquens: “Faciam verbum in terra, quod cum audieritis non credetis”²¹, propter absurditatem scilicet, ut eventus rei comprobavit. Nullum enim nec Dei nec hominum verbum ullo umquam tempore tam pertinaciter fuit reiectum quam hoc verbum crucis, in cuius doctrina diximus instaurandae Ecclesiae formam et modum contineri. Esse autem tanquam fundamentum omnium quae in doctrina Christi et Ecclesiae discuntur. Sic enim de eo Paulus apostolus dixit: “Tanquam sapiens architectus fundamentum posui; nemo autem aliud fundamentum ponere potest praeter id quod positum est, quod est Christus Iesus”²², pro nobis scilicet crucifixus. [4v] Ex his ergo si aliqua ex parte iam cognoscimus, quo potissimum verbo Ecclesiae pulcherrimus status restitui possit in integrum quam nunc in multis ab eo deflexit, proximum est ut quaeramus.

Q. Quomodo per hoc verbum crucis reformari possit Ecclesia, quae in multis suis partibus a pristina et gloriosa illa forma in qua eam primum Christum formavit discessit?

R. Si modum quaerimus reformandae Ecclesiae per verbum crucis, oculi nobis convertendi sunt ad id spectandum in quo Christus simul cum Moyse et Elia in monte Tabor loquens est visus. Ut enim Moysi dictum est de tabernaculo translatitio, quod ab ipso formandum erat: “Vide, ut omnia facias ad exemplum eius quod vidisti in monte”²³, sic enim reformando hoc tabernaculo quod nusquam transferretur, cuilibet architecto praecipere oportebit, qua in parte reformari debeat. Vide ut omnia facias ad exemplum eius tabernaculi quod vidisti in monte²⁴. Quale vero hoc exemplum sit Christus ipse, e monte descendens, declaravit, et in eorum forma expressit quos primos verbi ministros constituit et a quibus initium Ecclesiae formam duxit.

²⁰ *Col.* 1, 26.

²¹ *Cf. Is.* 6, 9; *Act.* 28, 26.

²² *1 Cor.* 3, 10-11.

²³ *Ex.* 25, 40.

²⁴ *Vide ut omnia... in monte*: probably a *saut du même au même*.

Q. A quibus tandem Christus initium formandae Ecclesiae duxit?

R. Ab iis qui verbi sui ministri primi futuri erant, idem ergo in reformatione Ecclesiae erit faciendum, ut de reformandis verbi Dei ministris prima et praecipua cura habeatur.

Q. Quos nam dicis verbi Dei ministros primum reformari oportere, ut reformetur Ecclesia, an ipsos episcopos? Hi enim hoc genere officii primum locum obtinent.

R. Hi quidem primi sunt reformandi quo eorum personam referunt, per quos primum a Christo formatos Ecclesia formata fuit. Hoc autem esse ipsos episcopos ut ante diximus dubitare non debemus, ad quorum iam reformationum exemplum caeteris inferioris gradus verbi ministri conformandi erunt. Sunt autem plures verbi Dei ministri de quibus sic scribit Paulus: “Posuit Deus in Ecclesia primum quidem apostolos, deinde prophetas, postea evangelistas, quos sequuntur pastores et tandem doctores”²⁵. Omnium vero horum verbum dependet ab illo verbo quod apostolorum verbum dicitur et prophetarum, de quibus dicit idem apostolus, ad eos qui per verbum Christi iam formati fuerant, eos fundatos esse super fundamentum apostolorum et prophetarum²⁶, quod perinde est ac si diceret super fundamentum verbi illorum. Ut ergo Christus in formatione Ecclesiae primum formavit apostolos, sic in eiusdem reformatione primum reformandi erunt episcopi, qui eorum locum tenent, ut ipsi per verbum reformati alios omnes reforment.

Q. Quodnam intelligis esse verbum illud episcoporum per quod omnes reformari debent?

²⁵ 1 Cor. 12, 28; Eph. 4, 11.

²⁶ Eph. 2, 20.

R. Idem quod proprium erat, ut ante dixi, apostolorum, id est verbum crucis, quod quidem est verbum regenerationis nostrae et verbum evangelii commendatum apostolis ut praedicarent illud [4x²⁷] omni creaturae, cui vero hoc praecipue commendatur. Eidem omne simul genus verbi commendatum est, nam omne genus verbi huic uni servit, ut in apostolorum exemplo videmus. Hoc verbum profiterentur iidem erant prophetae, iidem erant evangelistae, iidem pastores et doctores, sic igitur omne genus reliquorum ministrorum verbi servit episcopis, ut apostolis, qui principes verbi sunt constituti. Nec vero episcopi reformari ipsi possunt, et multo minus alios per verbum²⁸ reformare qui sermonem Christi de excessu eius, cum Moyse et Elia loquentis, non audierint, et ab eodem in gloria vim verbi ipsius non didicerint.

Q. Quid tandem est quod dices? An omnes episcopos qui vel seipsos vel alios sunt reformaturi ad montem Tabor amandabis, nescio quid haec mysterii haec tua oratio contineat, quod, quaeso, apertius explica; et descende ipse de hoc monte, ut nobis aliquid apertius dicas quod magis conveniat necessitati praesentis temporis, quo etsi episcopos habemus qui apostolorum locum teneant, tamen qui gratiam verbi, qui vim spiritus illorum teneant, non ita multos habemus, atque utinam haberemus, qui vel proximo accederent. Qui enim ad illorum mensuram accesserit, nemo fortassis ut omnes et singuli recenseantur quicumque post illos ecclesias rexerunt invenietur. Sed non hoc nunc agitur, ut investigemus quantum ab apostolorum spiritu et virtute abfuerint, aut iam absint, qui in eorum locum successerunt. Verum cum id non ignoremus, longissime abesse horum temporis²⁹ episcopos non solum ab apostolorum spiritu et doctrinae et totius vitae conversationis praestantia qui orbem terrae Christi verbo, tanquam solis fulgore, illustrarunt, sed etiam ab illis qui vel mediocriter instructi doctrina et moribus idem munus, multis post saeculis, sustinere; plures autem videmus qui cum doctrina praediti possent ipsi reformare gregem suum, amore vacui id facere nolunt. Non multos autem qui amore praediti, doctrina autem carentes, etiamsi velint non

²⁷ Page erroneously not numbered.

²⁸ Followed by *Dei* crossed out.

²⁹ *is of temporis* replaces *e of tempore*.

possunt, et magis cum de reformatione agitur, investigandus erit modus eos reformandi, ut hae difficultates tollantur, quo quisquam melius populum suum reformare possit.

R. Hinc quidem recipere oportere reformatione Ecclesiae nemini dubium esse debet. Eiusmodi enim exemplum a Christo, eius formatore, habemus, qui cum hoc opus aggrediretur hoc primum egit, ut episcopos et pastores³⁰ populorum, quos apostolos suos appellavit, formaret. Eundem vero ordinem deinceps secuta est ipsa Ecclesia, qui nunc maxime renovandus erit, si ea reformari debeat. Tu vero quod nunc [4xv] dicis esse plures qui, cum possint verbo reformare populum sibi commendatum, ideo hoc non faciunt quia labores fugiunt, alios qui, cum id maxime cuperent, quia tamen facultate, hoc est doctrina, carent, non posse; hoc sane, quo pacto verum sit non satis intelligo. Nec enim qui charitate caret, etiamsi doctrina praestet, facultatem haberet reformandi populi Dei; modo enim caret, qui in charitate consistit, sicut apostolus ait: “Scientia inflat, charitas autem aedificat”³¹. Qui ergo charitate caret, is modo aedificandi populi, etiamsi scientiam angelorum haberet, proculdubio caret; qui vero charitatem habet, indiget autem doctrina, huic non forma quidem aedificandi deesse videtur, sed materia, cui facilius providere poterit de materia quam illi de forma qui amore caret. Hoc enim qui caret numquam bonus architectus erit, etiamsi omni doctrinae genere abundet; qui vero charitate est praeditus, etiamsi doctrinae sit expers, faciliorem rationem habebit aedificandi et reformandi gregis sui quam quivis doctus sine charitate. Quamvis enim nihil loquatur, opera tantum(?) charitatis exerceat, vel ipso exemplo solo populum aedificare et reformare poterit. Uterque tamen istorum indiget reformationem: hic ut doctrina, ille ut amore augeatur. Idem vero est fons utrius quam id est scientiae et amoris, qui est ipse Christus, ad quem omnes sunt adducendi qui in Ecclesia reformandi erunt, maxime vero ipsi episcopi.

Q. Num qui charitate caret episcopus ad Christum amoris fontem perducere poterit per leges vel canones. Qui enim charitate est praeditus, licet scientia careat, ad illum iam pervenisse videtur.

³⁰ Followed by a letter crossed out.

³¹ *1 Cor.* 8, 1.

R. Si de ea charitate loquereris quae propria est pastoris gregis christiani, recte quidem diceris qui hac praeditus est, eum ad amoris et scientiae fontem, qui est ipse Christus, iam pervenisse. Nihil enim aliud est illa charitas quam amor Christi, quod ipse Christus satis explicavit, cum gregem suum primo suo vicario pascendum commendaturus dixit, ter illum sic interrogans: “Simon Ioannis, diligis me plus iis?”³². Haec vero dilectio hic amor sine magna scientia esse non potest: complectitur enim illam scientiam de qua Christus significare voluit cum exultans gratias egit patri. Quod quae abscondita esse voluit sapientibus et prudentibus, ea parvulis revelaverit. Est autem alius amor humanus, naturae nostrae proprius, quem insitum habemus erga nos ipsos, et nostros atque erga hominum genus qui, nisi divino illo Christi³³ amore irrigetur et illustretur, et caecus et perversus erit, in nos quidem ipsos ardens, in proximum languidus, in Deum vero non solum remissus sed, ut ita dicam, frigidus. De hoc amore puto te loqui cum interrogas quo pacto qui amore erga gregem affectus est, si scientia careat, instruendus sit [5r] et reformandus. Nec enim qui divino illo amore incensus ardet, quam proprie Christi charitas vocatur, is alia reformatione indigebit, ut enim quisquis ea imbutus est ita et ipse reformatus et ad alios reformandos ac docendos idoneus est. De hac enim charitate loquitur Ioannes apostolus cum dicit: “Unctio vos docebit omnia”³⁴. Nec vero cum nunc quaerimus quomodo reformandi sint episcopi aliud quaerimus quam ut ad hunc amorem, tanquam ad fontem reformationis, cum sui ipsorum tum aliorum perducantur. Qui vero huc iam pervenit, is eum doctorem domi habet qui leges, qui Scripturas, qui canones Ecclesiae primus condidit, idemque solus et amorem simul et scientiam docere potest. Hic autem amor quam necessarius sit omnibus pastoribus, et quam sine eo nullus amor nulla doctrina episcopis sufficiat, ut recte munere suo fungantur, vel exemplum illud primorum pastorum gregis Christi satis declarat. Qui cum et amore non carerent, et suam quam e sacro Christi ore hauserant, abundarent, tamen nec ab ipso Christo idonei sunt iudicati ad tantum onus sustinendum, antequam induceretur virtute ex alto, quae sane virtus non alia fuit quam virtus spiritus Christi, qui doceret eos et suggereret eis omnia ad munus pascendi pertinentia. Quae per verbum externum, vel voce vel scripto, hominum doceri potest, hic ergo proprius est doctor episcoporum, quem ut invenias non opus erit ut iam pastor factus extra tuam diocesim

³² Io. 21, 15-17.

³³ *Christi* added above the line.

³⁴ I Io. 2, 27.

ad gymnasia litterarum te conferas. Multo enim facilius domi tuae hunc reperies si, idem exemplum apostolorum ante oculos habens, tibi persuaseris suam cuiquam episcopo diocesim tanquam civitatem Hierusalem apostolis locum esse praescriptum, ubi hoc donum spiritus expectet. Interim autem dum veniat, orationi et ieiuni vacet. Haec enim est via quae recta ducit ad fontem scientiae et amoris, ad quam ingrediendam omnes episcopi sunt cohortandi. Ne vero a diocesibus suis discedant, severis etiam legibus astringendi.

Q. Num ita severe agendum erit cum episcopis ut a suis gregibus nulla de causa discedere permittantur? Quid si ad concilium generale, quid si alia de causa necessaria, quae ad universae Ecclesiae pertineat a summo pontifice accersantur: an vocati parere non debent? Quid vero si propriae Ecclesiae commodi procurandi causa ipse episcopus sua sponte summum pontificem adeat: an id ei facere non licebit? Quid tandem si ipse, cum huius se non satis instructum agnoscat, ad pascendi gregem doctrinae studio incensus eius acquirendam causa ad tempus in litterarum gymnasia se conferat, ubi edoctus de iis [5v] quae ad officium pertinent, fructuosius postmodum ad gregem rediens, illud exercere possit: an hoc eius consilium improbabilis? Haec quidem videntur considerata, quae ostendunt non ita severe cum episcopis magis oportere ut nusquam ulla de causa a grege eis discedere liceat.

R. Severe agitur cum episcopis quando eis non permittitur gregibus suis perpetuo adesse. Severa est enim illa sive lex sive iussio quae a cura gregis quacumque de causa episcopum avocat, quae non tam lex aut iussio quam necessitas esse debet. Illa vero non severa sed benigna est lex quae ab omni alio munere, publico et privato, vacationem episcopo dat, ut perpetuo cum populo, cum grege sibi commisso, cum suis filiis domi manere possit, atque idem ut faciat iubet. Quod si alio vocetur, vel summi pontificis edicto, vel alia de causa, etiam cum vocatur ad concilium, quod ad universae Ecclesiam pertineat, vel ipse sponte sua, ut privatum Ecclesiae suae negotium agat, summum pontificem aut alios principes adeat, necessitati quidem semper causa eius absentiae tribuenda erit. Numquam indulgentiae pontificis assignanda, etiamsi eum pontifex ad se vocet, quod consuetudine eius delectetur, cui cum paret episcopus, quemadmodum parendum est; ita tamen parere debet ut, gregem

suum per litteras alloquens, cum apostolo dicere possit: “Etsi corpore absens sum, spiritu tamen vobiscum sum: gaudens et videns vestrum ordinem et firmamentum eius quae in Christo est fidei vestrae”³⁵. Qui autem hoc animo necessitate urgente ad tempus corpore abest a sua diocesi, is non abesse dicitur, sed adesse. Hoc vero positum est in cuiusquam conscientia quae cum ex desiderio et sollicitudine redeundi, tum ex necessitate causae propter quam abest, quae diutius latere non poterit facile agnoscitur. Recte igitur semper recentiores canones statuent et confirmabunt quod veteres statuerunt: ut episcopus suo gregi perpetuo sit. Quod vero quaeris de illo qui voluntatem quidem pascendi gregis habet sed facultate caret, quia scientia et doctrina pastoralis muneris caret, non nisi eius consilium improbare? Si is ad tempus relicto et vicario custodi commendato grege, ipse ad litterarum gymnasia se conferat, ut ibi de proprio officio edoctus fructuosius postea officio suo fungi possit. Equidem sic censeo: si docto illi qui voluntate pascendi gregis caret, per canones ut absit a grege non liceat, multo minus huic qui bonae voluntatis in grege pascendo sibi est conscius, licet scientia careat, permitti debere ut ex eo loco discedat, ubi manens multo citius plura et maiora quae ad officium pastoris pertinent sperare poterit se dicere posse quam ea sint quae in gymnasiis litteras docentur. Quae enim ibi traduntur [6r] litterae non afferunt per se illam scientiam quae est propria episcopi, quaeque pastori ad pascendum gregem est necessaria, sed ea tantum quae est quaedam isagoge ad illam. Scientia enim quae propria est pastoris gregis Christi est doctrina spiritus, non litterae. Haec vero nullo in loco melius percipitur quam in medio illorum quos hac scientia pascendos quis se astrictum mandato Dei agnoscit. Nusquam enim melius hanc scientiam pastor percipies quam in medio grege, dum ea opere exerceas quam voluntas tua fert. Si quidem bona sis praeditus ad pascendum gregem, nemo autem qui hanc bonam voluntatem ad gregem affert ita rudis et omnis expers doctrinae esse poterit, quin multa cognoscat, multa intelligat quae ad utilitatem gregis pertinent. Ea ergo opere exerceat, ea docere incipiat, quae ipse moverit, quae amor erga gregem facienda dictaverit, et idem sibi proculdubio eventurum speret quod pastoribus illis evenit quibus primis Christi nativitas est annuntiata. De his enim scriptum est: “Pastores erant in regione illa vigilantes et custodientes vigilias noctis super gregem suum, et ecce angelus Domini stetit iuxta illos, et claritas Dei circumfulsit illos, et timuerunt timore magno. Et dixit angelus illis: «Nolite timere; ecce ego evangelizo vobis gaudium magnum quod erit omni populo, quia natus est vobis hodie

³⁵ *Col. 2, 5.*

Salvator mundi»”. Deinde sequitur: “Et subito facta est cum angelo multitudo militiae caelestis laudantium Deum et dicentium: «Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis»”³⁶. Numquid si illis qui bonam voluntatem in custodia gregis pecudum ostenderunt tanta lux et gratia affulsit, qui similem voluntatem in assidua cura³⁷ gregis Christi, qui est grex hominum, assiduitate operis declarant maiora sperare non debet? Numquid Christo cura est de pecudibus? Nonne si illi qui suo munere fungebantur in pascendo gregem pecudum digni habiti sunt, qui angelorum voces, cantus et testimonium de Christo nato audirent, et ipsum paulo post in carne viderent, qui Christi ipsius vocem se auditurum sperare poterit? Atqui hunc quidem qui vel sola illa opera exercuerit, quae bona voluntate praeditus agnoscit ad bonum gregis sui pertinere, iam Christi vocem audivisse non est dubium, tametsi ipse ignoret Christum secum locutum esse, ut Samuel puer, cum primum Deum loquentem audivisset, minime agnovit Dei vocem fuisse; putavit vero se ab Eli sacerdote vocari, sed ad iterum atque tertio eadem vox repeteretur, admonuit Eli cuius vox illa esset, iubens ut in hanc³⁸ formam Deo vocati responderet: “Loquere, Domine, quia audit servus tuus”³⁹. Eodem sane⁴⁰ modo, qui bonam pascendi gregis voluntatem habet, ac sentit se stimulare ad ea exequenda quae ad bonum gregis [6v] quocumque bono pertinere, sibi videbuntur admonendus erit illum stimulum, illam vocem quae intus monet, quae dictat quid facere debeat pro bono gregis, non hominis sed Christi spiritus vocem esse, pulsantis ad hostium et suggerentis quid facere debent, eundem autem esse qui primum illi bonam voluntatem dedit. Quod si ipse cum gratiarum actione agnoscens, sic spiritu respondeat: “Ingredere, Domine; iube, Domine, quoniam audit servus tuus, et paratus est facere cum tua gratia quicquid iusseris”. Hic quidem magnum gradum ad consequendum in dies maius lumen scientiae sibi acquireret: neque enim aliam sane ob causam tenebris ignorantiae circumfusi sumus quam, cum⁴¹ lumen scientiae nobis a spiritu veritatis infunditur, cum ab eo admonemur officii nostri vel auctorem lucis non agnoscimus vel, agnoscentes ea, facere negligimus quae facienda esse ipse nos admonet. Quare quicquid boni ad salutem aliorum nobis in mentem venerit et agnoscendum est a Patre luminum profluxisse, per spiritum filii sui, et semper, dum lumen

³⁶ Lc. 2, 8-11, 13-14.

³⁷ cura added above the line.

³⁸ Followed by *vo* crossed out.

³⁹ 1 Sm. 3, 9.

⁴⁰ sane added above the line in place of *enim* crossed out.

⁴¹ cum added above the line.

habemus, ut ille praecipit ambulandum, id est opere exequendum quod lumen veritatis nobis ostenderit, ne tenebrae nos comprehendant. Lux enim verbi non ita se totam uno tempore momento mentibus nostris infundit, ut lux solis, qui omnia quae sensibus comprehenduntur primo aspectu ante oculos proponit. Lux autem verbi saepe⁴² lucernae instar nobis communicatur, aliquando ut Lucifer, quasi praenuntia solis, aliquando ut sol matutinus, aliquando ut meridianus, plerumque vero ut vespertinus. Neque enim apostolis, quibus prae caeteris omnibus per spiritum sanctum haec verbi lux affulsit, omnia simul intellexerunt quae ad doctrinam spiritus pertinent, sed per hos gradus scientia aucti sunt, cuius rei exemplum maxime illustre habemus ipsius Petri qui, post doctrinam verbi a sacro Christi ore haustam, post eandem repetitam, et confirmatam adventu spiritus sancti (de quo ipse Christus dixit: “Hic docebit vos omnem veritatem, et suggeret vobis omnia quaecumque dixero vobis”⁴³), tamen non satis adhuc intelligebat quae ad delectum ciborum spectabant, cum iussus esset ad Cornelium centurionem proficisci, et cum eo manducare, verum cum se promptum ostenderet ad ea quae videbantur exequenda, qui priora praecepta executus fuerat, lucem veritatis hac etiam de re postea accipere meruit. Idem vero omnibus Christi apostolis accidit: ut enim se, in exequendis prioribus mandatis, diligentiores praebuerunt, sic lumen veritatis semper in illis crevit et robur, ut posteriora recte exequi possent. Idem sibi eventurum sperent omnes qui in eorum locum successere et eorum diligentiam imitantur ut, si quae ex Christi spiritu per motum suggestum sibi agnoverint, ad bonum gregis pertinentia ea exequantur; numquam lumen scientiae et veritatis in reliquis sibi dubitent defuturum, si vero vel unum illud verbum recte perceperint, et quae per illud [7r] iubentur executi fuerint, de quo Christus in monte Tabor cum Moyse et Elia est locutus. Quod non minus facile quisquam domi discere poterit quam in gymnasiis litterarum, atque etiam multo facilius reliqua omnia Christa dicta, et universa eius doctrina, hoc⁴⁴ uno verbo recte percepto, et ad intelligendum et ad exequendum erunt facillima. Hoc vero illud verbum est de quo toties iam dixi verbum crucis, verbum regenerationis ac reformationis singulorum et universorum, quod quidem unusquisque nimirum tum profitetur cum baptizatur in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti.

⁴² *saeper*, sic in the text.

⁴³ *Io.* 14, 26; cf. *Io.* 16, 13.

⁴⁴ Followed by *modo* crossed out.

Q. Quid in hoc verbo notas quod ad actiones pertineat, hoc enim fidei non operum verbum esse videtur: si enim illud corde crediderimus et ore confessi fuerimus, iam huic praecepto abunde videbimus satisfacisse.

R. Minime quidem ita se res habet: nec enim ullum verbum maius opus requirit quam illud sit quod in hoc fidei verbo faciendi esse significatur. Id vero est eiusmodi est ut reliqua omnia opera in se contineat, quod si exequeremur et sciendi et recte faciendi fontem in nobis ostenderemus. Tu vero sic rem totam considera quale tandem opus hoc sit re ipsa et factis ostendere te mortuum esse mundo, patribus et filiis, quorum nomine intelliguntur omnes propinqui et universum hominum genus, atque etiam spiritui nostro et omni spiritui adversanti mandato Dei, ut vivas quod reliquum est vitae temporis post baptismum obediens spiritui Patris, qui est spiritus Christi, et spiritus sanctus ut opere ostendas te amore Patrem erga omnes quibus praesis, obedientia autem erga Deum et omnes quibus Deus te obedire velit esse filium; denique, ut in omnibus ostendas et praeteferas⁴⁵ spiritum quaerentem tantummodo honorem Dei et bonum proximi. Haec enim omnia verbum baptismi et regenerationis, quod idem est verbum crucis, in se continet, et a te poscit ut moriaris cum Christo in cruce, consepultus cum eo in baptismo, ut cum eodem simul vitae restituaris, quod in ostensione spiritus per haec opera, quae modo dixi, tibi faciendi erit. Qui vero sic voluntatem suam bonam quam erga Christi gregem sibi commendatum declarat, an non is satis se doctum et a spiritu sancto instructo ostendit?

Q. Quid si haec omnia episcopus a spiritu sancto didicerit quae pertinent ad principia fidei, ac bonam praeterea voluntatem sic se habere ostenderit, ut tu modo exposuisti, num continuo is poterit et apostolorum partes, in quorum locum successit, ministerio verbi fungens, persequi, et prophetae, et evangelistae, et pastoris ac doctoris?

⁴⁵ *praeteferas*, sic in the text.

R. Poterit quidem, adiuvante illo qui voluntatem eius tali gratia stabilierit, qualem modo declaravimus, optime apostolorum vestigia in praedicando verbo⁴⁶ sequi. Verbum autem apostolorum [7v] reliquorum omnium vim, ut ante dixi, in se complectitur, quod ut magis manifestum fiat, hoc primum intelligere oportet apostolos ipsos in ministerio verbi ante omnia praeconum partes egisse. Hoc enim proprium fuit apostolorum, ut primum tanquam praecones evangelium denuntiarent, quod intelligo eos fecisse cum vocarent et invitarent omnes ad evangelium, ut illud implerent quod Esaias propheta dixit: “Exalta – inquit – ut tuba vocem tuam, qui evangelizas Sion”⁴⁷. Hae sunt enim partes evangelii praecones: vocare omnes ad audiendum evangelium atque ad obedientiam fidei. Hanc personam Christus ipse gessit quoties, ut de eo scribunt evangelistae, voce alius sublata clamans vocaret homines ad regnum Dei; quoties, sitientes ad aquas, laborantes ad requiem invitaret. Idem faciebant apostoli, cum ad audiendum verbum fidei incredulos vocarent, quod perinde est quasi praeconis voc[e]⁴⁸ homines e servitute ad regnum, e miseria ad beatam vitam invitarent. Quod cum fecerint episcopi, tum ad eos pertinebit veritatem vocationis verbo prophetarum confirmare. Sic enim fecit ipse Christus, hoc idem, ab eo edocti, apostoli fecerunt. Atque hinc est quod in ministris verbi secundo loco numeratur prophetae, quia post praeconium evangelii sequitur eius confirmatio per dicta prophetarum. Tertio autem loco evangelistae munus persequetur, sic⁴⁹ praestabit si evangelium in dictis prophetarum magis significatum quam expressum ita sua oratione, or[to] iam iustitiae sole, illustrabit, ut non tamquam lucerna in caliginoso loco lucere videatur, quale apostolus Petrus dixit fuisse testimonium prophetarum⁵⁰, sed postquam evenerunt quae praedicta sunt ab illis, in clara luce conspiciatur, ut fulgeat in animis credentium, quemadmodum de eodem dixit apostolus Paulus⁵¹. Qui autem hoc modo evangelii verbum tractabit, hic simul pastoris partes agit, proponens gregi verum animi pabulum, quod est evangelium, per quod fides et spes atque amor in Deum patrem per Iesum Christum excitantur et accenduntur. Quod qui perfecerint, tum demum ad doctorum partes agendas pervenient, qui ultimo loco inter ministros verbi numerantur. Has autem partes agit episcopus, cum quae in genere dicta sunt de fide, spe et dilectione per partes ita explicabit ut distinctius

⁴⁶ Followed by *Dei* crossed out.

⁴⁷ *Is.* 58, 1; 40, 9.

⁴⁸ Word partially illegible.

⁴⁹ Doubtful reading: the word is partially hidden by the binding.

⁵⁰ See 2 *Pt.* 1, 19.

⁵¹ Cf. 2 *Cor.* 4, 3-6.

doceat quae sint credenda, quae speranda et quae agenda. His enim tribus omne genus doctrinae apostolicae et episcopalis continetur; nec vero in his explicandis multum haerebit qui fundamentum de bonae voluntatis, de quo supra diximus, ad pascendum gregem proficiscens secum attulerit.

Q. An dicis episcopum qui se ad gregem cum hac bona voluntate contulerit posse sic apostolorum vestigia in praedicando verbo sequi, ut reliquorum omnium ministrorum verbi partes, sine aliqua maiori doctrina ex libris petita, praestare possit?

[8r] **R.** Si diligens fuerit in conservanda hac bona voluntate, in dies scientia et doctrina crescet: non ea quidem quae ex libris tanquam ex aquis externis hauriri solet, sed quae ex proprio puteo, vel potius ex fontibus Salvatoris, quos domi inveniet derivatur. Nec enim, ut supra dixi, litterae doctrina haec est, sed spiritus, quae tandem lectionem eorum librorum qui ab illis scripti sunt qui spiritus scientia claruerunt maxime confirmatur et augetur; quos cum legere num voluerit, eo melius intelligit quo in exequenda spiritus doctrina ipse magis profecerit. Verum quod quaeris, num vestigia apostolorum in omni verbi ministerio sequi possit qui non satis in eorum librorum lectione fuerit versatus, nec animum doctrinis excultum habuerit, sed bonam tamen voluntatem ad pascendum gregem attulerit; ad hoc dicimus non parva luce doctrinae apostolicae esse praeditum qui talem voluntatem secum ad pascendum gregem attulerit qualem ante descripsimus. Quod si idem nondum satis in lectione novi et veteris Testamenti exercitatum mentem habuerit, tamen hoc non prohibet quominus apostolorum vestigia sequi possit, modo summam doctrinam eorum, et cursum atque ordinem quo in praedicando verbo sunt usi, cognoverit. Summa vero haec non ita multis litteris continetur, quin facile ab eiusmodi viro qui voluntatem amore accensam ad pascendum gregem habuerit intelligi possit. Tribus enim capitibus, ut ante dixi, universa doctrina apostolica continetur, quorum primum est quod pertinet ad explicationem⁵² eorum quae fide sunt percipienda. Ea vero continentur in Symbolo apostolicorum; secundum est in iis quae pertinent ad explicationem rerum sperandarum, quae partim in eodem Symbolo, partim in ea

⁵² Followed by *rerum sperandarum* crossed out.

precatione quam Christus apostolos docuit continetur; tertium caput, quod pertinet ad opera, decalogus complectitur. Vide ergo quam paucis verbis summa totius doctrinae apostolicae contineatur, quae si propter brevitatem maiori aliqua explicatione indigere videantur, ne verbum quidem in tota hac summa continetur quod non interpretem in Ecclesia approbatum et dilucidum habeat. Est autem praeter haec sermo Christi in monte habitus, et a Mattheo evangelista satis copiose scriptus, qui universae Christi doctrinae summam satis et apertis verbis et sentiis, quibus si addiderit quae dilucida brevitae de numero, de ordine, de vi et potestate sacramentorum sunt scripta ab iis qui doctorum in Ecclesia munus exercuerunt, numquam dubitarem dicere episcopum, hac brevi institutione adiuncta illa bona voluntate quam ante descripsimus, satis instructum et aptum esse, ut apostolorum vestigia in praedicando verbo sequi possit. Ex iis quae iam diximus, quibus quasi terminis contineatur verbum episcopi, et qualis sit eius verbi materia, facile poteris intelligere. Formam vero [8v] Paulus apostolus satis exprimere videtur in eo loco ubi, exhortans eos qui dono linguarum erant praediti ut emulentur spiritualia, magis autem ut prophetent, sic prophetarum in Ecclesia genus orationis formam describit, ut dicat eos loqui ad aedificationem, ad exhortationem, ad consolationem⁵³. In has autem tres partes omnis fore oratio apostolorum erat distributa, hanc formam qui prophetarum in Ecclesia munere fungebantur ab apostolis acceperunt, apostoli vero a Christo.

Q. Num dicis apostolos hanc doctrinae formam a Christo accepisse ut ea primum docerent quae ad aedificationem, deinde quae ad exhortationem, tertio loco quae ad consolationem pertinent? Quid tandem est loqui ad aedificationem?

R. Quando ea docentur quae pertinent ad fidem, ad spem et ad dilectionem nostram in Deum per Iesu Christum erigendam et confirmandam, tum qui verbum hoc accipit, eum intelligo aedificari et hoc esse loqui ad aedificationem. Ab hac autem parte ordiebantur orationem suam apostoli, ut fundamentum futurae exhortationis et consolationis firmum statueret. Quod ita eos facere debere Christus satis significavit, cum mandata verborum

⁵³ Cf. *1 Cor.* 9.

quibus uti deberent apud omnes gentes illis daret: “Euntes – inquiens – praedicate evangelium omni creaturae, baptizantes eos in nomine Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti”⁵⁴. Ecce hic quod primum locum in ministerio verbi obtinet nihil aliud complectitur praeter ea quae ad aedificationem pertinet; non tam intelligit de sacramento quod per eorum manus conficiendum erat in aqua, quam de baptismo quod per eorum sermone fiebat sine aqua, cum fidem in Deum patrem et Iesu Christum eius filium et in spiritum sanctum praedicantes vim sacramenti explicarent per verbum fidei baptizantes et purificantes corda; quod est, ut ante dixi, loqui ad aedificationem quae fuit prima pars orationis apostolorum: et est doctrina pacis et quietis nostrae, quae ostendit, ubi fiant spe et amore, quiescere debeamus. Hanc sequitur ea pars quae pertinet ad exhortationem, quod Christus satis significat, cum in eisdem mandatis adiungit: “Docentes – inquiens – servare omnia quae praecepi vobis”⁵⁵. Quia vero haec doctrina quae de operibus tractat est doctrina laboris nostri: docet enim ea in quibus Deus ad suam gloriam in proprio filio laborem et opus nostrum requirit. Ideo qui de iis loquitur, hic merito ad exhortationem loqui dicitur: ut enim laborare velimus, exhortatione agemus, quam sequitur consolationis sermo, quem adhibeat necesse est qui ad labores pro Christi nomine subeuntes [subeundos?] hortatur, cum praesertim tot difficultates et pericula laborantibus impendeant⁵⁶. Quare hanc partem explens consolationis verbum Christus adiungit, cum ait: “Ecce, ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem saeculi”⁵⁷. Hoc enim verbum promissionis omne genus consolationis in se continet. His ergo tribus orationis [9r] generibus – quorum primum ad aedificationem et pacem ac quietem ostendendam pertinet ad quam sumus invitandi, secundum ad laborem ad quem exhortandi, tertium ad consolationem – vides omnem apostolici verbi formam contineri quae omnibus successoribus imitanda proponitur.

Q. An si apostoli, in iaciendis per verbum Ecclesiae fundamentis, usi sunt hoc ordine et cursu orationis ut primum, tanquam praecones, vocarent omnes ad evangelium; deinde, tanquam prophetae et evangelistae idem sic explicarent atque interpretarentur, ut qui illud

⁵⁴ Mt. 28, 19; Mc. 16, 15.

⁵⁵ Mt. 28, 20.

⁵⁶ The second *e* of *impendeant* added above the line.

⁵⁷ Mt. 28, 20.

acciperent aedificarentur in fide; postea autem exhortatione ad opera fidei exercenda uterentur, et tertio loco consolatione propter innumeras difficultates et impedimenta quae huic voluntati benefaciendi assidue se opponunt; idem tu faciendum iudicas iis qui nunc eorum loco in verbi ministerio successerunt, apud eos quibus iam promulgatum et denuntiatum est evangelium, qui iam a multis saeculis aedificati sunt in fide? Quod si apud infideles verba facienda essent, recte quidem diceres apostolorum formam in praedicando sequendam esse apud quos prorsus esset necessarium illa fundamenta iacere, sine quibus nihil salutare proponi posset. Sed iactis iam fundamentis salutis, et in animis populi christiani receptis, quid opus est illa repetere, nisi forte apud eos qui ea re iecerunt, apud quos facile assentior repetenda et confirmanda esse principia, ut omnis de his dubitatio ex eorum animis tollatur, et in recta fide confirmentur? Sed apud caeteros qui in fide patrum constanter perseverarunt, et nunquam de eius principiis dubitarunt, quid opus est ea quae inconcussa manent velle in quotidianis concionibus vel statuere vel confirmare? Illam quidem formam orationis quae ad exhortationem et consolationem pertinet frequentandam esse non negamus: neque enim semper tam alacres et prompti ad opera fidei exequenda sumus, quia stimulis saepe egeamus, neque cum in⁵⁸ illa incumbimus non magna consolatione egemus, propter multa et gravia impedimenta quae nobis, etiam bene agendi cupidos, sese offerunt, atque a bene operando nos abducunt.

R. Si hanc orationis partem quae ad exhortationem et consolationem pertinet tam necessariam esse dicis ut numquam sit omittenda, sed assidue frequentanda apud omne genus hominum, propter insitam in carne nostra pigritiam – quae verbo est excutienda – et propter multas difficultates et pericula in quibus subeundis consolatione egemus, non minus quidem necessaria esse videtur prima illa orationis pars, propter insitam eiusmodi principiorum oblivionem, etiam in animis illorum qui ea nec perverse [9v] unquam intellexerunt nec in dubium vocarunt. Non minori enim diligentia opus est nobis ad retinenda ac quotidie renovanda in animis nostris haec principia fidei quam industria ad illa opera exequenda quae ab hisdem derivantur. Idque ob infirmitatem carnis, quae ut est per se ad bene operandum pigra, vel potius aliena – sic oblivioni eorum principiorum unde vero bona opera emanant –, est subiecta. Quae quidem oblivio saepius etiam quam pigritia obrepit, imo tunc maxime

⁵⁸ *in* added above the line.

interdum obrepit cum ad agendum sumus accerrimi⁵⁹. Atque hoc quidem in causa est, ut saepe quae videntur apud homines praeclara nequaquam talia habeantur apud Deum, cui nullum opus vere gratum est quod non sit derivatum ex principii eius fidei, spei et dilectionis, quam in baptismo profiteamur. Ideo qui ut aspera in vias planas et prava in directa faceremus est nos hortatus, idem etiam digito monstravit in quem fidem, spem et dilectionem convertere deberemus. Quae autem ab hac fide proficiscuntur opera, sunt viae illud planae et semitae rectae, quae nos ducunt ad beatam vitam.

Cum vero in secunda parte mandatorum, quae Christus apostolis suis dedit, id contineatur ut docerent omnes gentes servare ea quae ipse praeceperat, non tam intellexisse eum de operibus legis existimandum est, quam de iis quae pertinent ad praeceptum fidei, spei et dilectionis, in quibus non minus exhortandi sumus ut huc oculos mentis dirigamus quam excitandi ut manus ad operandum porrigamus. Hoc vero cum reliquorum apostolorum exemplo quae in eorum scriptis videmus nos docent, tum praecipue divi Pauli, cuius plura quam caeterorum scripta⁶⁰ extant. Is autem, in ea epistola quae ad romanos scripta legitur quos licet fateatur in principiis fidei recens instructos fuisse. Tamen vides quemadmodum maiorem epistolae partem in confirmanda eorum fide consumit, quod quidem se facere dicit non solum ut illos sed etiam ut seipsum in fide confirmet, ut verba eius testantur cum dicit se desiderare impertiri eis aliquid gratiae spiritualis ad confirmandos illos, “id est – ut verbis eius utar – simul consolari in vobis per eam, quae invicem est, fidem vestram atque meam”⁶¹. Neque enim quisquam in hoc mortali corpore vivens tam firmus est in fide quin maior confirmatione egeat; et ut memoria principiorum fidei renovetur et inculcetur illi, id quod satis significat apostolus, cum in extrema eiusdem epistolae parte dicat se ea idcirco scripsisse ut eadem illis in memoriam revocaret, etiamsi sciret illos plenos esse dilectione et scientia⁶². Hoc idem vero cogetur facere etiam is qui vel hortari vel consolari voluerit. Non enim omne genus hortandi vel consolandi huius verbi ministerio convenit, sed illud tamen quod ex illis principiis fidei, spei et dilectionis derivatum sit, cuius rei praeclarum in eadem epistola exemplum habemus ubi apostolus, post iacta et explicata fidei [10r] fundamenta, iam ad opera hortari incipiens, sic ait: “Obsecro vos itaque, fratres, per misericordiam Dei, ut exhibeatis corpora vestra hostiam viventem, sanctam, Deo placentem, rationale obsequium vestrum, et nolite

⁵⁹ *accerrimi*, sic in the text.

⁶⁰ *scripta* added above the line.

⁶¹ *Rm.* 1, 12; cf. 1, 11.

⁶² Cf. *Rm.* 15, 14-16.

conformari huic saeculo”⁶³. Ex quibus verbis, et ex sequentibus quae pertinent ad exhortationem, satis constat, omnia ex principiis eius fidei quam in baptismo profiteamur, in quo nos mortuos esse cum Christo et resurrexisse ostendimus, omnem rationem ad opera exhortandi eum duxisse; ex iisdem autem ducit etiam omnem rationem consolandi. Ut ergo olim apostoli, cum fidei fundamenta iacerent in animis infidelium qui illam ignorabant, necessario a principiis illius, et ab ea parte orationis quae pertinet ad aedificationem, exordium orationis suam duxerunt, sic etiam nunc, apud negligentes et nimis obliviosos – ut est maxima pars hominum propter insitam in carne nostra tarditatem ad ea capienda et retinenda –, non minus est necessaria frequens horum repetitio. In quo etiam apostolorum exemplum habemus, qui cum separatim haec principia in suis scriptis – etiam apud eos quibus eadem ante tradidissent – saepe tractarunt, tum vero numquam ad exhortandum ad opera vel ad consolandum descenderunt; quin simul horum fontes qui in fundamentis et principiis fidei latent aperirent. Haec vero sunt quae lucem et vim operibus, et simul requiem et consolationem, laborantibus praebent, ex quibus colligere et concludere possumus haec tria genera orationis sic inter se esse coniuncta ut numquam recte ac plene unum sine ceteris tractari ac intelligi quidem possit. Nec enim modus operandi recte percipi poterit – quae, ut ante dixi, est doctrina laboris – nisi quo omnis labor, id est quies nostra, quae ostenditur in doctrina principiorum fidei bene intelligatur; consolari vero alterum nemo poterit nisi qui utrumque intelligat, et bene perceptum et cognitum habeat tam genus quietis quam laboris.

Q. Cur doctrinam quietis nostrae eam esse dicis quae nos⁶⁴ quo fidem, spem et dilectionem dirigere debeamus docet, distinctius, quaeso, hoc explica.

R. Quia sine ullo nostro labore discitur, et portum quietis nobis ostendit. Mandatum enim hoc licet maxime divinum sit; tamen non est ita supra te neque procul positum – ut dicas quis nimirum valet ad caelum ascendere, ut deferat illud, ut audiamus et opere compleamus – neque trans morte positum, ut causeris quis ex nobis poterit transnatare mare et illud ad nos usquam deferre sed, ut dicit apostolus, “prope est in ore tuo et in corde tuo; hoc enim – inquit

⁶³ *Rm.* 12, 1-2.

⁶⁴ Followed by two letters crossed out (sq?).

– est verbum fidei quod praedicamus. Quia si ore confitearis Dominum Iesum, et corde credideris quod Deus suscitavit eum a mortuis, salvus eris”⁶⁵. Iam portum salutis et pacis invenisti. Est vero idem verbum quod apostolis commendatum fuit, cum iussi sunt ut in quaecumque domum intrarent dicerent: “Pax huic domui”⁶⁶. Quod quidem mandatum qui accipiunt et custodiunt⁶⁷, hi in pace et quiete [10v] semper vivunt, et a Christo beati appellantur: “Beati – enim ait – qui audiunt verbum Dei et custodiunt illud”⁶⁸. In custodiendo vero hoc Dei⁶⁹ verbo, quod nullo nostro labore acquisitum ultro ad nos e caelo est delatum, tota difficultas versatur, in hoc laborarunt et magistri et magistri et discipuli. Nec vero hoc verbum ut caetera custoditur, siquid illud doceat quod iubeat memoria teneas, sed si opere compleas, tum enim maxime integrum custoditur. Nec vero inimicus humani generis, qui omnibus modis hoc verbum nobis eripere conatur, tantopere resistit ne intelligatur, aut intellectum memoria teneatur, quam ut voluntatem operandi ex praescripto eius, quod memoria tenemus et intelligimus nobis auferat vel alio divertat. Hoc autem si effecerit, etiam ut scientia augeamur desiderat: scit enim quo magis scientia abundaverimus, si ex ea operari neglexerimus eo gravius nos condemnandos fore. Damnationis vero futurae primum signum quod nobis in hac vita datur est animus inquietus: “Non enim est pax impio, dicit Dominus”, sed cor eius tamquam “mare fervens” est⁷⁰. Quid autem aliud existimas esse quod nos in hac vita tantopere affligit, quod inconstantes et erumnosos in omnibus nostris actionibus facit, nisi aut ignoratio aut oblivio aut neglectus illius portus quo fidem, quo spem et dilectionem nostram dirigere debeamus? Quod enim hae fluctuant in animis nostris, semper nos in actionibus fluctuamus et instabiles sumus; cum vero rectae constitutae et confirmatae sunt, tum constantes semper actiones consequuntur, et universa vita nostra gravis est et quieta. Merito ergo quae in hunc portum nos ducit pacis et quietis doctrina appellatur: quae vero in eo retinet laboris doctrina est vocanda, qua docemur quid operari quibus in rebus semper occupati esse debeamus, ne ex hoc portu eiiciamur. Haec autem doctrina qualis sit, si recte intelligi debeat, primo loco explicanda est nobis doctrina pacis et quietis nostrae: modum vero eius praedicandae cum intellexerimus, modum simul reformandae Ecclesiae intelligemus. Nec

⁶⁵ *Rm.* 10, 8-9; cf. *Dt.* 30, 14.

⁶⁶ *Mt.* 10, 12; *Lc.* 10, 5.

⁶⁷ Followed by *illud* crossed out.

⁶⁸ *Lc.* 11, 28.

⁶⁹ Followed by *mandato* crossed out.

⁷⁰ *Is.* 57, 20-21; cf. 48, 22.

enim alio verbo reformari pertinet quam eo quo initio est formata, nec alius modus melior inveniri eo quo usi sunt apostoli. Et est is modus qui significatur in sacramento baptismi, exprimitur autem in scriptis apostolorum, qui non minus verbo baptizabant credentium animos quam elemento aquae corpora, cum vim sacramenti verbo explicarent quo corda fidelium purificabant, ut dicere possent auditoribus suis quod Christus illis ante dixerat: “Iam mundi estis propter sermonem quem audistis”⁷¹. Imo hos magis proprium apostolorum muneris fuit, ut verbo baptizarent, quam externa sacramenti administratione, id quod satis significat apostolus Paulus, cum dicit: “Non enim misit me Dominus baptizare, sed evangelizare”⁷².

Q. Quid tandem esse intelligis baptizare verbo? Quando autem hoc fieri dicimus?

R. Tum quidem cum minister verbi vim eorum quae oculis videmus, in sacramento baptismi, [11r] per aquam a sacerdote fieri, oratione sic exprimit ut verbo factum respondeat et mysterium explicet. Duo autem fiunt in baptismo, quae sunt prorsus contraria ut vita et mors: cum enim immergimur, morti tradimur; cum vero emergimur, vitae restituimur. Sic oratio tractanda est ab eo qui baptismo verbi apostolorum imitari velit: ut primum quidem audito res morti tradat, deinde vitae restituat. Antequam vero morti tradat, verbo et oratio ne polluat. Hoc enim genus orationis primum praecedat oportet antequam, ab omni immunditia⁷³ lotus, ad vitam revertatur. Qui enim aliquem peccatis infectum ostendit, is eum pollutum et contaminatum morti tradit, ac mortuum deducit ad inferos; qui vero in morte et sanguine Christi, per quem lavantur peccata, fidem et spem auditoris erigit, is iam a peccatorum sordibus mundatum ad vitam reducit. Et hoc est verbum baptizare quod quidem toties fit quoties auditoris animus baptizatur per fidem in nomine Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti. Ut vero haec apertiora fiant, distinctius explicare conabimur quid sit baptizare in nomine Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti, a Patris nomine incipientes.

⁷¹ Io. 15, 3.

⁷² I Cor. 1, 17.

⁷³ Followed by a word crossed out.

Q. Quid est ergo baptizari in nomine Patris?

R. Is in nomine Patris baptizatur qui in nomine Filii baptizatur; in nomine vero Filii baptizatur qui baptizatur in nomine spiritus sancti; baptizatus autem est in nomine spiritus sancti quicumque, spiritu immundo et maligno eiecto, spiritum sanctum accepit. Hinc enim huius sacramenti minister suum orditur ministerium ab eiectione videlicet immundi et maligni spiritus. Quoniam vero hoc commune est omnibus baptizatis: ut per ministrum sacramenti et per virtutem verbi ab illis primum expellatur malignus spiritus. Hinc intelligere licet omnes non baptizatos a spiritu immundo et maligno possideri, qui per ministrum verbi, in virtute spiritus sancti quo donamur in baptismo, expellitur.

Q. Quid intelligis esse spiritum malignum, qui in baptismo expellitur?

R. Illum intelligo cui baptizatus renuntiat, qui est spiritus huius mundi, quae apostolus se non accepisse dicit, loquens in persona omnium qui bapti[s]mi gratiam receperunt: “Non enim – ait – accepimus spiritum huius mundi, sed spiritum qui ex Deo est, ut sciamus quae a Deo donata sunt nobis”⁷⁴. Qualis vero sit hic spiritus, baptizatus ipse declarat cum – primum a baptizante ter in hunc modum interrogatus “Abrenuntias Satanae?”; deinde “et omnibus operibus eius?”; tertio autem “et omnis pompis saeculi et vanitati et gloriae eius?” – ad singula interrogata respondet: “Abrenuntio”. Quia vero nemo abrenuntiat ei Domino cui numquam servivit, cum omnes et singuli qui ad baptismum Christi accedunt Satanae abrenuntient, hoc nobis declarat omnes et singulos qui nondum in Christo sunt baptizati Satanae domino servire, opera eius facere, pompas et gloriam [11v] saeculi amare. Hic vero est ille malignus spiritus qui expellitur in baptismo, ut loco eius principatus in hominem detur spiritui sancto. Hoc ergo est primum et praecipuum de quo docendus est qui Christo nomen dedit ut intelligat professionem suam, quae est abrenuntiare Satanae eiusque operibus et

⁷⁴ 1 Cor. 2, 12.

pompis, tum gloriae ac vanitatibus huius saeculi. Quae ut melius intelligantur magis fortasse explicandum erit.

Q. Quid dicimus esse spiritum Satanae?

R. Satanae quidem spiritum dicimus esse spiritum adversarium: hoc enim rem nominis docet. Nam Satan idem est atque adversarius, cum vero per se hic spiritus Deo adversetur, tum vero in salute et felicitate hominum, et ipsi Deo et hominibus, maxime est adversarius; ante omnia autem ipsi Christo, qui ob salutem hominum se morti tradidit. Satan vero, contra, ut homines perdat seipsum gravius damnat. Quicumque ergo hunc spiritum hauserit, eundem et Deo et sibi ipsi maxime adversarium esse est necesse. Tales quidem omnes sumus antequam spiritum Christi accipiamus, ut verissimum illud sit quod in proverbio dicitur: “Nemo laeditur nisi a seipso”. Nec vero quisquam maiore propriae salutis inimicum habet quam seipsum, quamdiu quidem spiritum Satanae in se regnantem habet, cum tamen nihil minus videatur homini iam a spiritu Satanae possesso. Talis enim hunc solum sibi amicum, Christi autem spiritum adversarium, iudicat, quod quo pacto se habeat nunc est clarandum.

Q. Qui fit ut homo Satanae spiritum et maxime adversarium et perniciosum amplectatur libentius quam Christi spiritum, maxime amicum et salutarem?

R. Quia homo generationem trahit a primo homine, qui de terra factus est terrenus, ideo ea libenter amplectitur quae sunt cognata naturae suae: qui enim de terra est, terrena amat, quia ergo Satanae spiritus semper ei terrena et carnalia offert quae sunt iucunda et grata tum sensibus, tum intellectui hominis terreni, ob ei semper est gratus. Contra vero, quia Christi spiritus, qui de caelo est, non terrena et carnalia homini sed caelestia et spiritualia ei proponit quae adversantur carni, hinc fit ut Christi potius quam Satanae spiritus adversarius illi videatur.

Q. An Satanae spiritus terrena semper homini offert, cum eius perniciem sub amicitiae specie meditatur, an vero aliquando etiam caelestia? Nec enim, quando primum amicitiam cum homine simulavit, talem quicquam sed divinam tamen similitudinem ei proposuit quae terrae rationem habuit. Tamen cum eius fructum, tanquam viam ad assequendam similitudinem quae maxime spiritualis est, proposuisse videtur, et sci eum decepisse?

R. Non in eo quidem Satan hominem decepit, quod illi tanquam rem omnium maxime optabilem divinam similitudinem adipiscendam proposuit, ac ne in eo quidem quod ad arborem scientiae boni et mali ocu-[12r]-los hominis dolosis verbis convertit, sed in eo quod hominem ad seipsum convertit: sic enim eum evertit, et de felicitatis gradu prorsus deiecit. Hoc vero est illud unum quod malignus Satanae spiritus, plenus omni dolo et fallacia, agit cum homine, ut eum ad seipsum convertat, eique persuadeat ut seipsum viam ad divinam similitudinem – id est ad felicitatem assequendam – faciat, id quod ruinam primi hominis et totius eius posteritatis principium dedit.

Q. Quo pacto homo ad seipsum convertitur?

R. Cum, aliquod bonum appetens, sibi ipse confidit seque illius boni assequendi auctorem facit. Cum vero homo nihil magis in votis habeat quam ad Dei imaginem et similitudinem aspirare, hoc quidem desiderium non oppugnat Satan, sed in hoc omni ratione et via pugnat ut is seipsum auctorem huius similitudinis assequendae faciat sibi que confidat. Quod cum fuit, tum sequitur id quod propheta dixit: “Homo, cum in honore esset, non intellexit; comparatus est iumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis”⁷⁵. Huc vero homo, dolo Satanae deceptus, praecipitavit, cum seipsum assequendae huius similitudinis auctorem fecit, atque hoc illud est quo primum Satan hominem tentando spectat: ut is seipsum auctorem suarum actionum faciat.

⁷⁵ Ps. 48, 13.

Hic vero spiritus est – confidentiae in seipso – expellitur autem primum per baptismum in nomine Patris.

Q. Quo pacto spiritus confidentiae quam homo habet in seipso, qui idem est spiritus adversarius saluti eius, expellitur per baptismum in nomine Patris?

R. Non solum per baptismum in nomine Patris hic spiritus expellitur, sed etiam per baptismum in nomine Filii et spiritus sancti. Nec enim haec baptismata separati potent nec sunt diversa, sed unum tamen baptisma. Quod fit in virtute unius spiritus sancti, qui idem est spiritus Patris et Filii, docendi vero causa sic distinguamus ut Patrem explicemus quid sit expelli spiritum confidentiae, propriae per baptismum in nomine Patris. Et quomodo hoc fiat, quod quidem facilius intelligetur si quod supra diximus de verbo baptismi, et quid sit hominem baptizari, memoria retinuerimus. Diximus vero hunc primum effectum sacri baptismi in homine esse ut illius anima a spiritu immundo – id est a spiritu confidente in mundo, confidente in seipso, in carne atque in creaturis – purgata, spiritum mundum, qui in solo Deo confidit, recipit. Nulla enim creatura ita per se est munda, quin homini in ea confidenti fiat immunda eumque reddat immundum. Quod vero hominis animum purificat est fides in Deum patrem per Iesum Christum, ut ante diximus verba Petri apostoli recitantes de purificatione gentium loquentis, quorum – inquit – “corda Deus per fidem purificavit”⁷⁶. Prima ergo fides quam profiteamur in baptismo est fides in nomine Patris; fides quae dicit: “Credo in Deum patrem omnipotentem, creatorem caeli et terrae”. Haec ergo est fides illa quae primum puri-[12v]-ficatur animus hominis in baptismo, quae amplectitur eum qui venit non solum in aqua, sed in aqua et sanguine, ut interius et exterius nos mundaret ab omni inquinamento animi et corporis. Per hanc autem fidem habemus Deum ex iusto iudice factum clementissimum patrem, ex quo omnia bona sperare possumus tam ea quae ad vitam corporis sustinendam sunt necessaria quam quae ad salutem animae pertinent. Hic vero primum expellitur spes confidentiae in creaturis quae rationem alicuius excellentiae vel dominationis habent supra nos, quales sunt primum quidem parentes qui nos genuerunt, deinde vero

⁷⁶ Act. 15, 9.

magistratus, atque omnes denique – ut Scriptura loquitur – qui in sublimitatem sunt positi; de omnibus enim dicitur: “Maledictus qui confidit in homine”⁷⁷. In his enim quantum quisque confidentiae ponit, tantum ab illa deficit quam profiteamur baptizati in nomine Patris.

Q. An si quis confidentiae habeat in patre, in rege, in principe suo, declinare eum dicemus ab ea fide quae quisque profitemur baptizatus in nomine Patris?

R. Non omne genus confidentiae, vel in patre vel in rege et principe, facit nos declinare a fide quam profiteamur in baptismo, licet Deus per prophetam nos admoneat “nolite – inquit – confidere in principibus neque in filiis hominum, in quibus non est salus”⁷⁸, et ipse Christus ad suos dicat: “Nolite vocare vobis patres super terram”⁷⁹. Hae enim admonitiones huc tantum spectant ut intelligamus illam confidentiam prohiberi quae spem adiunctam et collocatam in hominis tanquam in principe auctore eius quod desideramus boni, quaecumque illud sit. Talis enim confidentia non convenit puritati eius fidei quam profiteamur in baptismo, quae patrem atque adeo omnis boni auctorem et fontem solum Deum agnoscit, quod si quis nostrum boni aliquid a patre, a rege et principe suo vel recipiat vel expectet, illud quidem sic recipere et expectare nos iubet Deus, ut a ministris et dispensatoribus eius boni, quod ipse per manus illorum nobis largitur, nec aliam confidentiam vult nos habere in hominibus vel in ulla alia creatura, cuiuscumque gradus sit vel ordinis. Haec est autem illa fides per quam morimur omnibus creaturis: morimur enim in baptismo per fidem cum Christo, cum quo simul omnis spes et confidentia nostra in creaturis moritur. Nec enim quamdiu quis sperat in creaturis mortuus dici potest: nos vero mortui sumus cum Christo in cruce, et in baptismo sepulti, ut cum Deo resurgentis Deo soli vivamus. Qui autem Deo soli vivit, ut faciunt beatae animae quae iam in caelo sunt, hi non amplius confidunt in creaturis, sed in Deo solo animis haerent, eumque in creaturis vident, et creaturas omnes in eo. Talis autem est fides baptizatorum qui renuntiaverunt huic⁸⁰ saeculo, quod tantundem est dicere qui huic saeculo iam mortui sunt, adeo ut si quis eorum patrem secundum carnem videat, si regem, si dominum, is non amplius

⁷⁷ *Ier.* 17, 5.

⁷⁸ *Ps.* 145, 2.

⁷⁹ *Mt.* 23, 9.

⁸⁰ Followed by a word crossed out.

ut gentes faciunt in patre, [13r] in rege vel in domino suo secundum carnem confidit, qua si illi per se auctores ei esse possint alicuius boni, sed in solo Deo patre et rege ac domino omnium, a quo omne bonum descendit, adeo ut si bona aliqua a patre vel principe suo is assecutus, ea non ab illis sed ab ipso Deo per eorum ministerium se assecutum fide percipiat, illosque non tanquam datores bonorum sed, ut supra dixi, tanquam Dei patris omnium bonorum largitoris ministros, per quorum manus illa bona a Deo acceperit, agnoscat atque honorem afficiat. Hoc autem est de quo Christus, nos admonens cum dixisset “nolite vobis vocare patrem super terram”, statim adiunxit: “Unus enim est Pater vester caelestis”⁸¹, qui omnia nobis patris officia exhibere pro suo erga dilectum filium amore, qui non confunditur nos fratres appellare, semper est promptus. Ad hanc autem fidem et confidentiam invitat nos Christus, et ut eam perpetue retineamus hortatur, non solum cum indigemus quae pertinent ad salutem animae, in quibus patres nostri secundum carnem nos iuvare non potent, sed in omnibus quae vel ad salutem vel ad commoditatem corporis pertinent, in quibus patrum qui nos genuerunt opus nobis sufficere existimamus. In utrisque vero ad unum Deum patrem confidenter nos Christus accedere iubet, et utriusque necessitatis sollicitudinem in illum unum proicere, cum dicit: “Nolite solliciti esse quid manducetis aut quid bibaris, aut quo operiamini”⁸². Haec enim omnia gentes inquirunt, nomine gentium eos intelligens qui Deum patrem ignorantes confidunt in semetipsis, et a semetipsis haec petunt. Christus autem suos omni sollicitudine in rebus ad cultum vitae necessariis comparandis liberare volens, atque ita primum his gustum evangelii pacis dare, qui animi tranquillitatem secum affert, paternum erga illo affectum Dei patris, qui omnem hanc curam in se suscipit, declarans dicit: “Scit enim Pater vester caelestis, quia his omnibus indigetis”, quasi diceret “nolite ergo solliciti de his esse, sed tranquillitate animi oblata fruimini; primum vero quaerite regnum Dei et iustitiam eius, et haec omnia adiicientur vobis”⁸³. Ex his ergo aliqua iam ex parte intelligere possumus quid sit baptizari in nomine Patris, et qualem confidentiam in omnibus nostris necessitatibus afferat nobis huiusmodi baptismus. Proximum est ut quaeramus quid sit baptizari in nomine Filii.

⁸¹ Mt. 23, 9.

⁸² Mt. 6, 31.

⁸³ Mt. 6, 32-34.

Q. Quid est baptizari in nomine Filii?

R. Hoc quidem magna ex parte intelligitur ex baptismo in nomine Patris. Quemadmodum enim in eo diximus praecidi omnem spem quae ponitur in illis qui in altiori dignitatis gradu supra nos sunt positi, et nomine patris significantur, sic in baptismo qui fit in nomine Filii praeciditur omnis via impetrandi alicuius boni ab ipso caelesti Patrem, praeterquam per viam et nomen Filii praeciditur omnis spes boni consequendi ex illis qui vel infra [13v] nos sunt vel dignitate pares aut inferiores nobis, ut filii patribus, ut enim in principibus sic etiam in filiis hominum confidere prohibemus. In summa autem maledictus esse dicitur qui confidit in homine, a qua nos maledictione liberat baptismus in nomine Patris et Filii. Sed haec nondum satis explicant quid sit baptizari in nomine Filii, quod quidem tunc intelligimus fieri cum fides et spes nostra prorsus avertitur a filiis hominum, qui omnes una cum mundo crucifixi et mortui esse debent, totaque convertitur ad Filium Dei. Si enim Christus pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sumus; cum ergo nobis⁸⁴ omnes sint mortui, non maior spes in filiis hominum ponenda est⁸⁵ quam in mortuis: tota vero in eo ponenda qui, cum Filius hominis esset, fuit et est etiam Filius Dei, qui mortem nostram moriendo destruxit et vitam resurgendo reparavit nobisque Deum patrem reconciliavit, et per quem confidentiam et accessum habemus ad Deum in spiritu. Quia vero vita haec nostra, qualiscumque sive in carne sive in spiritu agatur, sine spe et confidentia aliqua vel in creatore vel in creaturis peragi non potest, in baptismo autem constat hominem non solum mortem sed vitam etiam consequi: mori enim eum et resurgere cum Christo dicimus ideo cum sic morimur nobiscum simul moritur spes aliqua nostra, loco cuius resurgit alia. Ideo cum dicimur baptizari in nomine Filii, ut clarius omnia intelligantur, quaerendum est.

Q. Quanam est illa spes quae moritur nobiscum cum baptizamur in nomine Filii, et quanam illam quam nobiscum suscitatur?

⁸⁴ *nobis* added above the line.

⁸⁵ Followed by *qui cum Filius hominis esset* crossed out.

R. Spes illa quae moritur nobiscum, in nomine Filii baptizatis, qualis sit melius intelligetur si quae spes quae confidentia moriatur, et quae nobiscum suscitatur cum baptizamur in nomine Patris adhuc magis explicabitur. Moritur enim in nobis illa spes et confidentia quae in veteri homine maxime vivebat, et quam ille sic in seipso positam habebat, quasi ipse sibi auctor esset salutis et boni proprii. Suscitatur autem per fidem, in baptizatis in nomine Patris⁸⁶, spes illa quae agnoscit Deum patrem esse, principium et salutis et omnis nostri boni, eundemque esse solum bonum, solum potentem, solum sapientem: itaque illa spes et confidentia quae haeret in creaturis in nobis moritur cum per fidem videmus fontem omnis sapientiae, omnis bonitatis et omnis potentiae, omne in Deo patre omnipotente et creatore omnium, a quo et haec et alia omnia⁸⁷ nobis sunt petenda et speranda. Nunc autem cum modum haec a Deo patre assequendi quaerimus, in baptismo filii admonemur nec modum nec viam aliam inveniri posse perveniendi ad hunc bonorum omnium fontem nisi per fidem et spem in Filium Dei, mortuum et suscitatum pro nobis, per cuius mortem et resurrectionem caeli nobis sunt aperti et via ad fontem bonorum omnium patefacta. Itaque Christus, virtutem sui adventus exprimens, cum paterni⁸⁸ nominis honorem et auctoritatem ad Deum patrem semper [14r] referat, de seipso dicit: “Ego sum via, veritas et vita”⁸⁹. Ut vero in baptizato in nomine Patris omnis confidentia praeciditur erga omnes alios qui nomen patris in terris retinent – nisi quatenus instrumenta sint summi Patris, per quae ille sua bona nobis communicat – quales sunt qui nos genuerunt atque omnes magistratus, qui nostrae salutis et boni publici ac privati curam gerunt, per quorum manus Deus nobis sua paterna bona communicare ac dispensare solet, sic etiam, cum de huiusmodi dispensatoribus loquimur qui baptizantur in nomine Filii, etiam praecisam confidentiam habere intelligimus ne in illis qui eos baptizent, tanquam in primis dispensatoribus, confidant. Est enim unus tantum primus dispensator bonorum patris, quemadmodum etiam unus est Pater: hic vero est unicus Dei filius, qui se dicit esse principium viarum omnium Dei patris, per quem Deus Pater primum omnia sua bona omnibus creaturis dispensat. Adeo ut si quaeratur a nobis quatenam spes praecidatur et moriatur in hoc baptismo qui fit in nomine Filii, respondere debeamus omnem illam spem et confidentiam praecidi et mori quae poni solet in illis qui existimantur viae vel instrumenta per quae nobis Deus sua bona communicat et dispensat, praeterquam in ipso Filio

⁸⁶ Followed by *et Filii* crossed out.

⁸⁷ Followed by *a* crossed out.

⁸⁸ Followed by *h* crossed out.

⁸⁹ *Io.* 14, 6.

unigenito, qui brachium, potentia et sapientia Dei appellatur, adeo ut si alii existimentur nos iuvare in via ad Deum sua vel sapientia vel potentia, eatenus intelligamus ab eis iuari quatenus ab hoc primo brachio atque ab eius sapientia et virtute diriguntur cuius ipsi sunt instrumenta, et haec est illa fides et spes quae suscitantur in nobis baptizatis in nomine Filii. Moritur ergo, eadem summatim repetamus, in baptismo qui fit in nomine Filii omnis spes et confidentia de modo assequendi alicuius boni a Deo patre, qui est fons omnium bonorum, per aliam viam quam per ipsum Filium, et suscitatur simul spes et confidentia per eam fidem quam habemus in eo, qui mortuus est propter delicta nostra et resurrexit propter iustificationem nostram, omnia bona in nomine eius a Deo patre assequendi. Haec vero spes non confundit, quia charitas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est⁹⁰ et qui dat nobis hanc spem et hanc fiduciam quae numquam sane in nobis inesset nisi baptizaremur in nomine spiritus sancti, quemadmodum baptizamur in nomine Patris et Filii.

Q. Quid est baptizari in nomine spiritus sancti?

R. Iam diximus quid sit baptizari et quid in ipso baptismo fiat. Morimur enim mundo et omnibus quae sunt in mundo, et mundo nobis simul moritur, ut inquit apostolus: “Mihi enim mundus crucifixus est, et ego mundo”⁹¹. Crucifixus enim tum mihi est mundus cum video mundum: hoc est totum hominem una cum Christo ad mortem condemnatum, oppressum et ad se salvandum impotentem, cruci affixum et iam morientem atque adeo mortuum. Haec enim omnia tum video cum Christum video emittentem in cruce spiritum, in quo totum simul cum eo humanum [14v] suum spiritum in manu Dei patris emisisse ostenditur. Hic vero integrum et expletum esse intelligo sacrificium illud et holocaustum Deo gratissimum: sacrificato enim tandem spiritum hominis, totus homo ei in holocaustum et victimam est oblatus. Baptizari ergo in spiritu sancto intelligo esse mori spiritui veteris hominis malo et prophano, et illum prorsus emittere ac loco eius accipere spiritum bonum et sanctum Dei patris, quo ad bonam vitam formamur spiritum Filii Dei et hominis, qui sanctificat, vivificat et fructificare nos facit. Nisi enim granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit, ipsum

⁹⁰ Followed by *nobis* crossed out.

⁹¹ *Gal.* 6, 14.

solum manet; si autem mortuum fuerit, multum fructum affert. Tu vero, si haec iam intellexisti quae non ita obscure sunt dicta, quin vel a mediocriter instructo in litteris atque etiam rudi et idiota intelligi potent, iam summam et fontem apostolice doctrinae intellexisti quae in libro *Numeri* sub nomine putei significantur, cum dicitur: “Ascendat puteus, quem foderunt principes, et paraverunt duces multitudinis in datore legis et in baculis suis”⁹². Hunc enim puteum ipsi apostoli, qui principes et duces fuere gregis Christi et novi populi, cui promissum est regnum caelorum, foderunt et paraverunt in datore legis, ex quo qui aquam haurit et ex eo bibit, quod fieri non potest nisi ab eo qui plene ei crediderit, qui iam verbum vitae in se habet et fontem aquae vivae, et salientis in vitam aeternam, cuius vis haec est, ut si quis hac potata statim e vita discederet, non mori, sed a morte statim ad aeternam vitam transire diceretur. Qui vero, post acceptam hanc fidem et hanc caelestem aquam, in vita manet, huic restat, hac fide instructo ea exequi mandata quae Christus iis praecipit observanda, qui ab apostolis baptizati essent in nomine Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti. Haec secunda pars mandatorum Christi eam scientiam secum affert quam laboris doctrinam appellavimus, cui ea est adiuncta in qua laborum consolatio continetur. Prima autem, ut saepius iam dixi, est doctrina pacis et quietis nostrae, quae docet ubi fides, ubi spes et dilectio nostra quiescere debeat, et est quasi solum et fundamentum reformationis hominis, vel potius integra reformatio. Reliqua enim duae partes doctrinae christianae vel in eo versantur, ut te confirment exhortando in fide, spe et dilectione, vel in eo ut, luctante cum iis quae te ab illo salutis portu abducere solent, consolentur. Qui vero stabilis permanet in ea fide et dilectione quam descripsimus, huic ad perfectam animae reformationem nihil deest nisi ut ad gloriam illius qui has caelestes virtutes dedit in conspectu hominum, atque ad exemplum, utilitatem et reformationem aliorum operetur, ut luceat lux eius non solum intus in abscondito cubiculi et in penetralibus animi et coram Deo, sed etiam foris coram hominibus, ut videant eius bona opera et glorificatione Patrem qui est in caelis. Verum quod ad illum attinet, si acceptis iis caelestibus virtutibus, statim ex hac vita discederet: non e vita, sed e regione umbrae mortis in⁹³ regionem [15r] aeterno tempore beata vita fruentium migraret. Dum vero in hoc mortali corpore versatur, laborat et ingemiscit laborando, dolens spem suam tentationibus, saeculi infringi, amorem vulnerari, fidem concuti, quo fit ut saepius verbo sit consolandus,

⁹² Nm. 21, 18.

⁹³ in ripetuto e crossed out.

confirmandus et, post accepta vulnera, sanandus. Ex iis quae nunc dixi facile perspicere poteris in quo vis totius reformationis hominis consistat.

Q. Num igitur totum opus reformationis terminis fidei, spei et charitatis concludis? In iis quidem positum esse fundamentum reformationis nemo negare poterit, sed populus, et qui de hac re loquentes tamdiu negotium reformationis di[f]ferri conqueruntur, non tam de fide, spe et dilectione nostra quam de moribus conqueruntur, in quibus deformationis nostrae vis maxime apparet, hanc deformatio necesse tolli, et antiquos mores restitui cupiunt, de quibus si de reformatione disserens dicere praetermitteres, quam vis totam doctrinam explicares, nihil adhuc te de ea locutum existimarent. Qui vero de conformandis moribus ad antiquorum exemplum eorum qui hac fide, spe et dilectione praestiterunt, loquuntur, etiam si nihil de fide, nihil de spe et dilectione nostra dicant, hos de reformatione recte disseruisse existimant.

R. Si populus existimat nisi reformatis moribus reformatione Ecclesiae fieri non posse, recte quidem iudicat. Illud vero non recte, si putant mores reformari aut de iis recte quemquam disserere posse qui regulam morum ipsam fidem, spem et dilectionem non prius constituerit, quae sunt ipsius legis scriptae (quam solam vulgus hominum regulam morum existimat) vera regula et quasi lex, ut ita dicam, ipsius legis. Tota enim vis legis ab ea fide et spe pendet quam ante descripsimus, et ab ea dilectione quam apostolus Paulus plenitudinem legis esse affirmat⁹⁴. Quare hoc concludit haec oratio, nemine recte et ordine de reformandis moribus disserere posse qui non simul de his tribus caelestibus virtutibus disserat, quia vero nec morum deformitas qualis sit, nec quid mores corrumpat satis quisquam perspicere poterit nisi primum qualis sit fides nostra perspexerit, et quid sit quod eam corrumpat. Hinc est quod de moribus formandis nemo recte loqui potest qui fidem in Christum non recte cognoverit, nec est cur quisquam existimet se satis quae ad mores deformatis Ecclesiae pertinent perspicere, cum quae contra legem naturae aut scriptam commissum viderit, aut populum tum satis reformatum iudicet, cum bonis legibus quid cuique faciendum sit praescripserit. Qui enim Ecclesiae deformatos mores corrigere et reformare velit altius introspiciat, et penetret in

⁹⁴ Cf. *Rm.* 13, 10.

radicem malorum morum oportet, videtque quo pacto non solum contra praecepta legis scriptae vel naturalis a quoquam committatur, sed quo pacto illas violans Christi corpus deformet et in Christum peccet, primum quidem in spiritum, deinde in corpus eius, quae est Ecclesia. Haec obscure nunc dici scio, sicut ea fuerunt quae in principio nostri sermonis diximus, [15v] cum de reformatione loqui caepimus, eam scilicet perfectiorem Ecclesiae reformationem esse quae propius accedit ad illam formam in qua Christus gloriosum se ostendit in monte Tabor, cum Elia et Moyse de excessu suo loquens, ubi simul diximus summam deformationis Ecclesiae in passione Christi representari, cum corpus eius ignominiose tractaretur, conspueretur, flagellaretur et tandem cruci suffigeretur. Quae quidem et tum obscure dicta fuisse scio et ita semper erunt, quamdiu sine exemplis proponuntur eorum in quibus Ecclesiae deformatio magis apparet, quae utinam nobis deessent: tot enim et tanta sunt ut, quocumque oculos et cogitationem ad contemplanda eius membra convertimus, nullum non maxime degenerasse a prima illa praeclara forma et deformatum esse videamus.

[ACDF, f. 26r: *Secunda pars, in qua de populi reformatione agitur*]

Q. Qua tandem in parte maxime extare Ecclesiae deformationem iudicas, ut ad eam reformandam in primis incumbere debeat episcopus?

R. In ea quidem qua se minus deformatam agnoscit, id est in ipso populo, qui tantum abest ut suos errores agnoscat ut omnem malorum culpam quibus Ecclesia vexatur, et quorum ipse magna ex parte est auctor, in suos rectores transferens, reformationem nihilominus se desiderare praesefert cum nihil minus revera cupiat. Haec radix est totius reformationis⁹⁵, sed sive populum sive eius rectores, sacerdotes et reges reformare volumus, quibus quasi tribus ordinibus universum Ecclesiae corpus continetur, hoc in primis statuendum erit: neminem posse per verbum reformari qui deformitatem suam non prius agnoverit, et cum dolore et compunctione cordis detestatus fuerit. Quare sive cum populo, sive cum regibus, sive cum sacerdotibus de eorum reformatione agendum sit, huc primum orationem et verbum dirigere

⁹⁵ ACDF, f. 26v: *deformationis*.

oportebit ut ei quem reformare velis deformitatem propriam ostendas. Deformitatis vero summa et vis tota in eo consistit: quod qui tibi formam – et eam gloriosam, qui gaudium, qui pacem animi, qui vitam, et eam aeternam – dedit, eum tu ignominia afficere contristari et extinguere conaris. Hoc enim faciunt omnes qui sunt deformata Ecclesiae membra, quorum conatus ad nihil aliud demum proficiunt quam ut sibi ipsis ignominiam imprimis, tristitiam et miseriam afferant, seque ipsos extinguant, ac pro sempiterna vita aeternam mortem consequantur. Haec scio adhuc obscure dixi, sic autem ut spero explicatiora erunt, si ad memoriam iterum revocaverimus quam Petrus apostolus, in prima sua oratione ad eos qui tum populi Dei appellatione gloriabantur, dixit, et qua ratione illis compunctionem cordis commovit, quod quidem sic fecit cum orationem his verbis conclusit: “Certissime ergo sciat omnis domus Israel, quia Deus dominum et Christum fecit hunc Iesum, quem vos interemistis”. Sequitur autem: “His auditis compuncti sunt corde”⁹⁶. Si ergo haec audis, si vides nunc populum Dei, quem Christus, a iudaeis interfectus, proprio sanguine sibi acquisivit, esse deformatum, certissime scias et tu et populus ipse ex hoc fonte omnem deformationem emanare quod hunc Iesum, quem Deus⁹⁷ pater dominum et Christum, hoc est regem et sacerdotem [16r] omnibus dedit. Eodem modo nos contumeliose tractavimus, qua in parte deformati sumus, ac spiritum eius contristare et quantum in nobis est extinguere studuimus; corpus autem eius, quae est Ecclesiae, affligere, ut quisquam autem in hoc scelerato et impio conatu progressus est, ita magis minusne est deformatus. Haec igitur est deformationis origo et summa: quod hunc Iesum nec regem nobis nec dominum esse libenter patimur, sed illum primum quidem contemnimus, deinde illudimus; omnia autem ea in perpetuo vitae nostrae cursu referimus, cum deformati simus, quae iudaei triduo illo passionis Christi fuerunt. Quare qui reformare populum velit, aut rectores eius, hinc incipiat, et huc orationem suam dirigat oportet ut in quo potissimum deformatio consistat cognoscere faciat, ut ad salutarem paenitentiam perducatur. Quoniam vero nunc nobis sermo est de eo episcopo qui per gratiam Dei in Christo est iam reformatus ad eam formam quam antea utcumque explicavimus; quo pacto idem cum populo suo agere debeat ut verbo eum reformet, hoc iterum atque iterum repetimus; si exemplar eorum qui primi formatores populi Dei per verbum fuerunt sequi velit, ab ea parte reformatione ordietur a qua illi orsi sunt, ut dolosi et perniciosi consilii in Iesum, quem Deus dominum et Christum dedit, reos peragat.

⁹⁶ Act. 2, 36-37.

⁹⁷ Followed by *praeter* crossed out.

Q. Quid tandem est quod nunc dicis? Valde enim obscure loqui videris. Ego vero, si ulla in re, in hac maxime te apertis verbis sensum tuum explicare cupio non solum ut a me et a quovis e populo intelligi queat. Agitur enim nunc, ut scis, de modo reformandi populi verbo et oratione sacerdotis, qua in re claris et apertis verbis et sensibus populo notis uti in primis est necessarium, si fructus ex eiusmodi oratione populus referre debeat. Quod vero dicere caepisti cum populo suam primam deformitatem a sacerdote ostendi voluisti, cuius summa in hoc consistit: quod Christus ab eo non minus contumeliose et impie quotidie tractatur quam olim a iudaeis illo triduo damnationis eius. Hoc quidem eiusmodi est ut nihil minus credibile nec quod magis abhorreat a populi sensibus dici possit, praesertim hoc tempore quo ipse⁹⁸ populus, honoris Christi causa, quem a caeteris ordinibus cum maximo ipsius damno contumeliose tractari quaeritur, reformationem, ex qua omnium salus pendet, assidue flagitet. Et quia non fit, suos rectores, sacerdotes, a quibus initium reformationis incipere oportet, aiunt, quod cum neque ab ipsis sacerdotibus negetur, neque tamen quod ad hanc rem pertinet post tot annos quibus in conventibus privatis et conciliis generalibus de reformatione agi est caeptum, quicumque dignum piorum hominum expectatione sit factum. Hic populus merito quidem, ut sibi videtur, indignatur, cum quotidiana experientia doceat non modo eius necessitatibus ad Dei gloriam per rectores suos non subveniri, qui praecipuus fructus esse debet reformationis. Sed quo diutius de hac consultatur, eo gravius ubique ipse plectatur, cum a sacerdotibus tum a principibus.

R. Si graviter plectitur populus ob simulationem rectorum in iis quae pertinent ad reformationem Eccle-[16v]-siae, merito et iure id patitur, quia ipse primus in eadem re simulavit et assidue simulat, neque quicquam minus cupit quam veram Ecclesiae reformationem. Hoc autem apertis iam et claris verbis dico ut ab universo populo intelligi queat: si pastores populorum, ut ipsi accusant, non recte officio suo funguntur, si magna pars eorum sit negligens, si aliqui, etiam sub pastoris persona, lupi partes agant, magnam huius rei culpa populum sustinere. Si denique nulla sit reformatio, ne id quidem sine maxima populi

⁹⁸ *ipse* added above the line.

culpa accidit, qui cum maxime reformationem promovere possit, suas ipse partes primus negligit agere, quae sunt maximae; deinde etiam impedimento est quo minus alii suas peragant. Hoc vero, quia maxime interest populum bene perceptum⁹⁹ et cognitum habere, iccirco episcopus in aures eius assidue instillare et infundere debet, ut sciat si reformationem desideret nullam maiorem difficultatem tanti boni assequendi, nullum maius impedimentum esse quam quod ipse non modo suas partes, quae sunt maximae in hoc sancto negotio, agere negligat, sed auctor sit totius deformationis Ecclesiae, quod nisi populus agnoscat et confiteatur, nisi veniam supplex a Patre misericordiarum petat tum misericordiam consecuturum, tum locum futurum, ut fruct[uose]¹⁰⁰ se cum eo de Ecclesiae et cuiusque reformatione episcopus loqui possit, quam in unoquoque, ut iam¹⁰¹ diximus, principium ducit ab accusatione sui ipsius. Et hoc est quod primum in omnium animis planctari et aedificari debet, evulsa tanquam inutili et vitiosa radice omni aliorum accusatione, atque ea maxime quae culpam suorum peccatorum in rectores transfert.

Q. An tu igitur ita consens in conformando praesenti Ecclesiae statu, cum in doctrina, tum in moribus, ad praeclaram illam et pulcherrimam effigiem, quam ipsa iam inde a principio suae constitutionis habuit, maximas populi partes, atque adeo primas esse debere? Explica, quaeso, id distinctius. Nec enim satis intelligo quaenam aliae partes populi in hac reformatione esse possint, nisi ut tanquam bonus ager a peritis et diligentibus agricolis, sic se populus patiat colli et seri a suis rectoribus, quibus in hoc studio atque opere cessantibus, cum a populo fructus exigis, perinde facere videris ac si ab agro nondum arato et sato, nondum vitibus neque ullis arboribus consito, triticum, uvas vel alios tempestivos fructus expectares. Nec tamen inficior, si populus a multis se abstineret quae contra officium ac pietatem assidue committit, ut modo dixisti, minus deformem minusque sentibus et vepribus obductam hanc Ecclesiae vineam futuram, sed cum illa iam omnibus fere partibus obsoleverit et quasi dumetis obsita sit, quod tu, quaeso, principium eius¹⁰² renovandae, quam formam a populo requiris? Qui qualis nam fuerit prima huius vineae forma ne suspicari quidem potest

⁹⁹ *er* of *perceptum* added above the line in place of *rae* (di *praeceptum*), underlined with dots.

¹⁰⁰ The binding makes the rest of the word illegible.

¹⁰¹ *iam* added above the line.

¹⁰² *eius* added above the line.

eorum certe quorum in fide et¹⁰³ tutela¹⁰⁴ populus est eiusmodi studium et procuratio esse debet, in primis autem sacerdotum quibus, ut paterfamilias, gregem suum pastoribus aut agricolis vineam, sic Deus populum commendat, ut ille salutari doctrina atque institutione altus et excultus uberrimos fructus ferat, quod si non faciat, vide ne omnis culpa in eos merito transferenda sit quorum ad officium populi cultura pertinet. Ipse vero populus [17r] misericordia potius et consolatione dignus haberi debeat, quippe qui praeter caetera onera quibus gravissime a suis rectoribus se oppressum quaeritur, illud molestissimum atque intollerandum sustinet, quod quasi ager neglectus et ab omni cultura hominum alienus iaceat.

R. Si populum accuso, iuste id quidem et maximis et gravissimis de causis facere videor. Neque tamen ita eum accuso ut eius rectores omni culpa libere: cave enim putes sine magna utrorumque culpa tot¹⁰⁵ tanta ac tam late sparsa mala in Ecclesiam invehi potuisse. Itaque ne utros excusandos censeo, sed quoniam nunc differimus quomodo Ecclesiae in veterem illum suum statum praestantissimum restitui atque ad primam illam morum et doctrinam formam revocari possit, ideo in hoc praeclaro opere primas partes populo tribuendas esse duxi non quod nesciam in agricolarum diligentia¹⁰⁶, qui sunt ipsi sacerdotes et rectores populi, cultum Ecclesiae, tanquam vineae, esse positum, sed quam utilitatem vinitoris industria et labor afferre poterit nisi ipsa terra facilem se atque obedientem eius operi praebeat. Neque certe aliud a populo in hac reformatione requirimus quam ut tanquam ager bonus vinitori ad colendum, sic ille suis rectoribus facilem se ad corrigendum praebeat. Quod si faceret, nonne vides eam formam quam requirimus facile ac pulcherrime effingi posse; contraque, sine hac populi obedientia, nihil fructuose a rectoribus inchoatum iri?

Q. Quam tu, quaeso, Ecclesiae et ipsius populi culturam vocas? Nonne eam doctrinae et disciplinae rationem qua primum ipsa Ecclesia ab optimo et diligentissimo agricola culta et sata fuit? Quod si tanti hanc disciplinam facis ut in ea libenter audienda et percipienda fundamentum Ecclesiae renovandae consistere existimes, qua quidem in re tecum facio

¹⁰³ *in fide et* added above the line in place of *in* crossed out.

¹⁰⁴ Followed by a word crossed out.

¹⁰⁵ Followed by *et* crossed out.

¹⁰⁶ *di* of *diligentia* replaces *negli* crossed out.

(nullum enim fundamentum apud homines repeti altius potest), illud animadvertere debes populum quidem egregie iam suas partes agere atque omnes officii numeros implere. Non modo enim de moribus et rebus divinis disserentes attente et libenter audit, sed tantam earum rerum cupiditatem praesefert ut maiorem certe ostendere non queat is qui, fame enectus, cibum flagitat. Hunc vero cum ei pastores tam parce ac restricte suppedient, pluribus autem in locis omnino quamvis maximis quaerelis efflagitatum etiam negent¹⁰⁷, tanto sane maiori commiseratione dignus videtur quam illi parvuli de quibus Hieremias, calamitosum veteris populi statum describens, dixit: “Parvuli petierunt panem, et non erat qui eis frangeret”¹⁰⁸. Quanto gravior est calamitas eo cibo carere quo animi ad aeternitatem aluntur quam quo fragilia et caduca corpora ad brevissimum tempus sustentatur? De hac re igitur cum tecum loqui in animo haberem ac de universi populi statu, qui mihi valde deplorandus videbatur, non abs te quidem populi accusationem tam gravem, praesertim qualis haec est in qua illi omnia mala quibus Ecclesia deformatur attribueres. Hoc enim concludit tua accusatio, sed medicinam potius et consolationem expectabam, qua doceres quo pacto oblato vel dilato tam necessario et diu expectato [17v] ac flagitato concilii oecumeni remedio, ad quod tanquam ad sacram anchoram omnes confugiebant, populus – inter tot fluctus opinionum quibus nunc Ecclesia, tanquam navis in mari tempestuoso, periculosissime iactatur – sic cursum vitae dirigere possit ut non omni vento doctrinae circumferatur, nec tanquam vi tempestatis, sic fluctibus impietatis obruatur; quod genus consolationis abs te etiam nunc expecto.

R. Tum demum medicinae et consolationi locus erit cum ipsa accusatio, cuiusmodi sit, plenius intellexeris. Id autem fiet, si totius mali radix, quo nunc maxime Ecclesia laboret, patefacta fuerit. Ea vero adhuc quasi sub terra latitare videtur, quare faciendum est ut per accusationem nostram, si fieri possit, eruatur: hac enim bene perspecta et cognita¹⁰⁹ facile, ut spero, quae remedia comparanda sint, et unde ea petenda, et quorum culpa factum sit, ut illa servis adhiberentur, videre poterimus. Idem enim fit in curandis pravis animi affectionibus quod in morbo corporis accidere videmus, ut antequam medicus mali causam investigarit, vix aliquid certi ad levandum et recreandum aegrum adhibere potest. Eo autem diligentius morbi huius tam periculosi principium et causam quaerere debemus, quo minus inter eos convenit

¹⁰⁷ *ent of negent* replaces *et (neget)* crossed out.

¹⁰⁸ *Lam.* 4, 4.

¹⁰⁹ Followed by *facere* crossed out.

qui de adhibendo remedio tantis Ecclesiae malis loquitur qualisnam sit haec omnium malorum radix et in quibus praecipue haereat. De hoc enim, inter ipsos ordines ex quibus universum Ecclesiae corpus conficitur, haud parva est contentio, dum nemo animum in ducere vult ut apud se hanc malorum fontem ordiri fateatur, ex quo fit ut principes in sacerdotes, sacerdotes in principes, populus vero quasi ipse prorsus omni culpa vacans, in utrosque omnium incommodorum causas reiiciat. Ego vero, ut iam dixi, quemadmodum neminem excuso, ita apud illum horum malorum fontem latere maxime existimo qui se maxime innocentem iactat atque ab omni culpa longius abesse profitetur: hic vero est ipse populus.

Q. An tu in populi, potius quam in principum, peccatis fontem malorum quibus nunc respublica christiana infecta est quaerendum existimas? Atqui experientia non solum horum temporum, sed omnium saeculorum, contra docet atque confirmat nullius fere societatis mores, atque instituta depravari, quia ea corrupta potius a principes quam a populi vitiis oriatur. Quae res locum dedit illius philosophi dicto: “Tales esse solere cives quales sunt ipsi principes”¹¹⁰, quibus ille verbis significare voluit tam bonorum quam malorum omnium fontes esse ipsorum principum vel virtutes, vel vitia. Ex quo illud etiam nescio cuius poeta: “Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis”¹¹¹. Quod vero illi de suis rebus publicis et regnis dixerunt, id etiam in hac nostra christiana republica, id est Ecclesia, accidere nihil sane dubito. Quare si fontes vel bonorum vel malorum quam versantur in Ecclesia quaerimus, haec ipsa, quae magistra rerum appellatur, experientia ad principum potius quam ad populi mores nos mittit.

[18r] **R.** Mittit quidem, si fontem malorum appellamus eam, qui minus latet et ob eam causam prius et illustrius oculis quaerentium sese offert. Eiusmodi enim sunt virtutes ac vitia principum quae, ut magis sunt illustria, ita magis videntur in civitates et populos suam vim diffundere, quemadmodum re vera faciunt. Nam mores populi aliquando in meliorem partem, sed plerumque in peiorem mutant, quod ut negare non possumus, sic illud affirmare non dubitamus. Principum moribus populum non ante corrumpi quam ipsi principes populi

¹¹⁰ Cicero, *Epistulae ad familiares*, 1, 19, 2.

¹¹¹ Claudianus, *De quarto consulato Honorii*, vv. 299-300.

contagione inficiantur, nimirum ab occulta illa radice quae a vulgi moribus ortum habet, quos principes libenter imitari solent, ut nulla fere corruptela populum depravent, quin eadem prius ipsi ab illo depravati sint. Licet igitur verum sit populi mores principum moribus effingi. Hoc tamen haud paulo¹¹² verius est, indice etiam ipsa rerum experientia, numquam principem gravius peccare quam cum mores suos populi moribus similes reddere studet, imo numquam peccare nisi cum populi mores et studia imitatur. Ex quo illud concludere possumus: omnium principum et rerum publicarum vitia, itemque ipsius Ecclesiae corruptelam, ex populi vitiis tanquam ex fonte profluere et oriri. Verum, ut dixi, hic fons non omnibus patet, nec vero qua in parte lateat in tam innumeris populi peccatis satis constat. Quare hoc in primis a nobis quaerendum esse duximus: ut fontem malorum, unde omnis Ecclesiae calamitas manat, accurate penitusque cognoscamus.

Q. Quid tandem est in vitiis populi quod fontem omnium malorum appellas?

R. Illud quidem quod unum si corrigat populus, simul etiam innumeros suos errores corrigeret et Ecclesiam innumeris malis liberaret. Id vero est fictae simulationis vitium, quam vocabulo graeco nostri solent hypochrisim appellare. Hanc unam tolle e populo, et simul de Ecclesia omnia quae eam nunc vexant mala sustuleris, quae sine dubio ab hypocrisi populi, tanquam e fonte, derivantur.

Q. Quanam in re facilius deprendi posse hypochrisim populi existimas, ex qua tot mala in Ecclesiam profluere affirmas?

R. Non in una quidem, sed pluribus rebus atque adeo in omnibus eius tum dictis, tum factis, in quibus se pietatis et religionis patronum et custodem facit. Et ne procul exemplum hypochriseos populi quaeramus, ea, si placet, ponderemus, quae tu modo commemorasti cum

¹¹² paulo added above the line in place of *parum* crossed out.

populum diceret doctrinae rerum divinarum percipiendae incredibili studio teneri, et ex desiderio reformationis vehementer laborare. Quibus in rebus, cum is summum pietatis amorem praeseferat, non tamen difficile est eius hypochrisim manifeste deprehendere nisi forte quod ille ore iactat, id etiam animo sentire existimas. Utinam quidem populus vel alterum istorum ex animo desideraret – profecto non ita laboraremus –, sed ipse cum universa Ecclesia maximam omnium malorum allevationem ex utraque re [18v] sentiret, imo vero nihil hoc populo beatius fieri posset. Primum enim quod ad ipsum studium rerum divinarum, quam famem verbi Dei ex consuetudine loquendi litterarum sanctarum licet appellemus; quod igitur ad famem verbi huius attinet, eius praesertim quod voluntatem ipsius Dei nobis explicat, nosti quid scriptum sit de eiusmodi famelicis? “Beati – inquit ipse Christus – qui esuriunt, quoniam ipsi saturabuntur”¹¹³. Nec vero aliis bonis eiusmodi famem sentiens saturari posset quam iis quae Ecclesiae totius reformationem et pacem secum afferent. Sed quia in utraque re ipse sensum animi sui egregie dissimulat quibus ipsius Ecclesiae renovatio in primis continetur, ideo mala omnia quibus illa miserrime vexatur ex eius hypochrisi originem habere numquam sane verebimur affirmare.

Q. Quo potissimum argumento ostendis populum sensum suum dissimulare, cum dicit se fame verbi Dei laborare. Multa enim sunt (siquidem ex signis de voluntate ipsius iudicare volumus) quae non solum ex animo hoc eum dicere, sed magno et ardenti animo, instar eorum qui fame enecti panem flagitant, doctrinae sanctae pabulum expetere ac postulare ostendunt. Primum enim quod hoc tempore videmus, non in hac vel illa tantum civitate, sed in omnibus fere locis et provinciis ubi viget nomen christianum, populum libenter loqui de Scripturis sanctis, et eos qui de iis disserunt avidius quam unquam consueverit audire. Nonne hoc apertissime ostendit amorem verbi Dei et quasi appetitum salutaris cibi in eius animo vere excitatum esse? Deinde vero, cum is non contentus alios disserentes audire vel de auditis et perceptis loqui litterarum divinarum pascua, a quibus antea non parum abhorrere videbatur, quod earum pastum tanquam cibum insuavem aspernaretur, audeat irrumpere, nonne id tibi vel maximo argumento populum mirifico religionis et vere pietatis studio incensum esse?

¹¹³ Mt. 5, 6; Lc. 6, 21.

Quod nisi ita sit, cur, quaeso, Itali, Galli et caeterae nationes christianae Scripturas in suam quaeque linguam tanto studio convertendas curant? Iam vero illud commune populi iudicium eos religionis magistros probantis qui sua dicta Scripturarum testimoniis confirmant, repudiantes autem eos qui vel iis minus abundant vel humanae sapientiae verbis suas conciones ornant, quos tamen ante admirari solebat, nonne, inquam, hoc vulgare iudicium pietatis populi non fictae et adumbratae sed verae atque expressae tibi fidem facit, eumque cum se fame verbi laborare clama[t] non simulare, sed ex animo loqui apertissime declarat? Huc adde tot et tantas querimonias, quibus omnium aures assidue circum sonant, dum vulgo dolent sibi pastores ac magistros non dari a quibus doctrina salutari imbuantur, atque id pie, iuste sobrieque vivendum instituantur, quae tu omnia, si diligentius attenderis videbis, opinor nihil certe causae esse cur populum tam vehementer accuses, aut eius quam memoras simulationis insimules.

R. Haec quidem ut dicis populum scientiae rerum divinarum cupidum esse satis aperte declarant. Sed utrum haec cupiditas eiusmodi sit ut Deum ad misericordiam allicere debeat, atque ab eo impetrare ut tandem mittat qui caelesti verbi sui pabulo eos pascat, an potius ad iram ipsum invitare, [19r] ut et eos et pastorum et pabuli doctrinae suae penuria in dies magis affligat, nunc diligenter nobis exquirendum est. Neque enim omnis verbi Dei cupiditas eam quam nos intelligi volumus famem declarat. Quam multos enim esse putas qui studio rerum novarum et quadam, ut ita dicam, curiositate inducti verbum Dei scire desiderent? Quam multos item ambitione et lucri cupiditate incitari quod videant hoc tempore magnum honorem haberi huic scientiae, et praemia magna iis qui eam profitentur esse proposita? Quot vero in populo esse putas qui solo contentionis studio ad discendas Scripturas impellantur, qui se magnos et singulares viros fore ducunt, si de rebus divinis non modo cum paribus¹¹⁴ sed etiam cum pastoribus et parochis suis disputare possint, quibus hac cura se¹¹⁵ inferiores esse existimant, quod illi Scripturas lingua sibi nota, ipsi vero ignota, audiant et legant, quae si communi et patrio sermone traderentur, non dubitant se superiores, nedum pares in iis intelligendis fore? Ex qua quidem re factum est ut clamores illi de Scripturis in notam populo linguam convertendis excitarentur; haec ita se habeant, quid dicemus? Num tali desiderio verbi divinam misericordiam commoveri, an potius indignationem, quae debitas poenas ab iis

¹¹⁴ *paribus* added above the line in place of *patribus* crossed out.

¹¹⁵ *se* added above the line.

qui verbo suo tot modis abutuntur repetat? Et cum famem verbi eo tempore simulent, quo maxime abundant, tandem in illos talem famem immittat qualem, per prophetam Amos, Deus minatus his qui verbo suo eodem modo abutebantur, ut auferat ab illis pastores, consiliarios et intelligentes, et immittat illis “famem non panis, ac sitim non aquae, sed audiendi verbi Dei; et commovebuntur – inquit propheta – a mari usque ad marem, ab aquilone usque ad orientem, circuibunt quaerentes verbum Dei, et non invenient”¹¹⁶.

Q. Tu quidem tam graves Dei poenas imminere dicis, si populus¹¹⁷ in hoc simulato doctrinae caelestis amore perseveret. Sed vide ne eas iam sustineat, propterea quod hac simulatione iampridem usus sit. Hanc enim doctrinam multos magno studio quaerere videmus; paucos autem inveniri.

R. Immo eam inveniunt multi et illam quidem abunde. Hodie enim tanta eius est copia quanta haud nescio an maior multis ante saeculis extiterit. Sed quoniam populus hac abundantia nimis immoderate ad contentiones abutitur, ut eos praeteream qui Dei verbum quaestui habent, aut ambitione ad illius stadium ducuntur, profecto hoc maximopere verendum est: ne eiusmodi praeposterarum contentiones aliquid tale pariant quale ex prolixis disputationibus eorum qui iudicio carent saepenumero nasci videmus, ut omnia in dubium incertumque revocentur, etiam illa quae antea pro perspicuis et certissimis habebantur, at in iis quae ad religionem et ad pietatem spectant nullum verbum Dei certum atque exploratum habere perinde valet, quasi omni pabulo verbi carere. Huius vero famis iam iamque imminentis signa quaedam mihi perspicere videor in illis qui, post longas concertationumque plenas [19v] disputationes, certissima religionis dogmata pro dubiis et controversis habere incipiunt, et multa reiiciunt quasi falsa quae et re ipsa sunt verissima, ut semper apud maiores nostros pro certissimis sunt habita. Haec vero sunt illius famis initia quam Deus ore prophetae minitatur, quaeque abusum copiae verbi semper sequi solet, at populus, ut nunc est magis in abusu et quasi quodam, ut ita dicam, luxu verbi Dei peccare quam eius inopia laborare videtur. Abusi enim verbo et quasi luxu eius eum peccare intelligi volo qui, intelligentia verbi

¹¹⁶ *Am.* 8, 11-12.

¹¹⁷ Followed by *his* crossed out.

abundans, non ad eum usum illud accommodat, neque ea mensura verbum cupit quam praescripsit divina sapientia. Hoc autem ut caveamus nos monet apostolus, cum dicit: “Nolite sapere plusquam oportet sapere”¹¹⁸. Quemadmodum enim in capiendo cibo corporis est quidam modus a Deo lege naturae praescriptus, quem qui transgreditur intemperans appellatus et contra legem naturalem facit, sic in cibo animi, quod est verbum Dei sumendo, intemperantia omnis fugienda est, in quam incidimus si vel in alium usum quam a Deo praefinitum est verbum ipsum transferimus, vel eo tanquam helluones nullo adhibito modo nos replemus. Haec autem intemperantia se patefacit quoties, ut supra dixi, ad contentiones, ad ambitionem vel ad quaestum verbo Dei abutimur, id quod populum hodie passim facere videmus. Nosti autem quod dicat Iacobus apostolus de recto usu et abusu verbi.

Q. Quid tandem scribit hic apostolus de recto verbi usu? Abusus enim qualis sit iam aliqua ex parte, ex his quae dicta sunt, intelligimus; de usu vero aliquid capere nunc cupio.

R. Audi igitur quid ille scribat, nam verba ex eius epistola tibi memoriter recitabo: “Quis sapiens et disciplinatus est inter vos? Ostendat ex bona conversatione operationem suam in mansuetudine sapientiae; quod si zelum amarum habetis, et contentiones sunt in cordibus vestris, nolite gloriari et mendaces esse adversus veritatem. Non enim est haec sapientia desursum descendens a Patre luminum, sed animalis, sed terrena, sed diabolica. Ubi enim est zelus et contentio, ibi inconstantia et omne opus pravum. Qua autem desursum est sapientia, primum quidem pudica est, deinde pacifica, modesta, suadibilis, bonis consentiens, plena misericordia et fructibus bonis”¹¹⁹. Ex his ergo perspicue vides quo pacto apostolus, exclusa omni contentione verborum, divini verbi sapientiam ad vitae cursum recte instituendum accommodat, eiusque usum iis praecipue terminis includat, quibus si contenti erimus, numquam profecto deerit, unde nos abunde pascere possimus. Suppeditat enim divina Providentia unicuique domi suae verbum, quantum ad vitam honestissime sanctissimeque traducendam, satis est ut, quamvis populus omni cum pastorum destitutus sit, tamen tuto et salutariter pietatem suam alere ac sustentare possit. Hoc uno verbo si hactenus usus fuisset,

¹¹⁸ *Rm.* 12, 3.

¹¹⁹ *Iac.* 3, 13-17.

maximum mihi crede, et pulcherrimum Ecclesiae reformandae fundamentum iactum videremus.

[20r] **Q.** Quodnam verbum istud est quod unumquemque domi suae habere dicis, idque tam clarum et perspicuum esse ut praeceptorem non desideret, tanquam fructuosum ac salutare, ut si populus ad regendam vitam eo uti velit in omni pietatis officio excellere, et simul magnum Ecclesiae reformandae fundamentum iacere possit? Nunquid tu singulorum domos eiusmodi thesauro putas abundare?

R. Puto equidem esse neminem quem delectet ad normam verbi Dei actiones suas et omnem vitae cursum dirigere cui verbum ipsum non suppetat. Aliis autem maior, aliis minor inest scientia verbi, idque ex singulari Dei dono, qui dona sua singulis distribuit ut vult et ut cuique magis expedit. Nemo vero tam inops donorum Dei reperitur qui non unum saltem verbi huius praetiosissimi talentum habeat, quod si velit, nunquam profecto illi deerit quo animum suum ad pietatem alere et sustentare possit. Quod si aliquis ea sit stultitia vel arrogantia (atque utinam bona pars populi talis non sit) ut quoniam minor ei caelestis huius thesauri copia communicata sit, ea nequaquam uti velit. Videat is ne paterfamilias iratus idem illi dicat quod in parabola Christi dicitur ei qui, quod unum dumtaxat talentum accepisset, ob id nullum ex eo lucrum fecerat, nempe ut id quod habet reddat¹²⁰, ac tandem inopia verbi miserrime pereat caeteris qui pro mensura verbi quod acceperant negotiati sunt, divitiis mirandum in modum verbi auctis.

Q. Quale tandem verbum illud dicis esse quod nemo, utcumque pauper et rudis, in populo negare potest se repositum tanquam talentum quoddam domi suae habere?

¹²⁰ Cf. *Mt.* 25, 14-30.

R. Nonne¹²¹ tibi¹²² loco talenti magni habendum esse videtur illud verbum quo iubemur alteri facere quaecumque nobis fieri velimus, contraque nihil in quemquam moliri quod nobis fieri nolimus? Dic, oro, si quis hoc praeceptum in animo suo scriptum habeat, poterit ne merito conqueri se verbo defici, quo mores et vitam suam ad Dei voluntatem formare possit? Ecquid hic noster populus ad perceptionem huius verbi praeceptoribus eget, qui suos quoque pastores, cum praeceptum hoc saluberrimum minus servant, tam bene novit reprehendere? An non vides, si vel ad huius unius verbi normam populus vitam suam dirigat et formet, maximum atque optimum formationis Ecclesiae principium esse iactum? Cur igitur populus, si eam tantopere expetit, ab hoc praecepto quod in promptu habet non orditur? An fortassis verbum hoc minoris esse putatis quod domi vestrae nascitur, quod vulgare et commune est omnibus? At videte quam fallamini, num vile potest esse id quod universam Dei legem et prophetas in se continet? At hoc elogio praeceptum hoc ornat ille qui ipsum in cordibus hominum, tanquam thesaurum quendam praetiosissimum, recondidit. Nullum vero auri pondus, nulla gemmarum excellentiam, cum praecepti huius praetio comparari¹²³ posse, facile existimabit, quisquis ad servandum ipsum diligentiam contulerit, hoc vos cum minime faciatis; quid mirum si eius praetium ignoratis? [20v] Cum vero id vile censetis, quia domesticum, scitote vos reformationem Ecclesiae, quam iactatis contemnere ac pro nihilo putare? His verbis populum appellare non equidem dubitarim, quamquam ille quotidianis clamoribus se cupidissimum huius reformationis ostendit.

Q. An igitur existimas populum fecte ac simulate reformationem flagitare, eiusque animum ab ea prorsus abhorrere? At enim si tecum ipse cogites quot et quanta commoda populo vel Ecclesiae deformatio detrahat, vel additura sit eius reformatio, quanquam gravibus oneribus illum sit levatura quibus nunc miserrime praemitur, non equidem dubito quin, mutata sententia, iudicaturus sis populum eam sincere atque ex animo flagitare votisque omnibus expetere. Quid vero, cum ipsum pontificem maximum tum reliquos principes ad indicendum et cogendum concilium oecumenicum magis impulit quam communis vox omnium

¹²¹ *Non* of *Nonne* followed by *ita* crossed out.

¹²² Followed by *dico* crossed out.

¹²³ *ra* of *comparari* added above the line.

provinciarum veram pietatem ac religionem profitentium, quae quidem ob hanc unam causam celeberrimum hunc conventum agi flagitarunt, quod per ipsum eos quos supra dixi fructus reformationis celerrime se percepturos iudicabant? Quin etiam quosdam populos huiusce rei studio et cupiditate eo provectos vidimus ut, cum rectores suos in re tam salutari nimium cunctari ac tergiversari persuasum haberent, impatientes morae ipsos a gubernaculis civitatum ac provinciarum reiecerint et per seipsos ad ipsam reformationem acriter incubuerunt. Quae quidem cum populus facit, nonne tibi satis signi dar[e] videtur sese nihil reformatione ardentius expetere, nihil charius aut antiquius habere?

R. An cum hoc ipse videam, qua parte populus reformationem adiuvere possit, ea parte non modo illum nihil ad eam conferre, sed occulta potius consilia, ne Ecclesia purgetur ab iis sordibus quibus deformata esse videtur semper agitare, ac domi suae, ubi se latere existimat quae impie cogitavit, exequi, quod idem foris quoque faceret si per illos principes quorum negligentiam in reformanda Ecclesia accusat, id impune facere liceret; cum haec, inquam, videam possim ne mihi persuadere populum ex animo potius quam fecte et simulate reformationem postulare? Praesertim si de illa loquamur quae universae Ecclesiae corpus comprehendit. Numquam enim ego negabo qui populus nonnullis Ecclesiae membris medicinam adhibere velit, sed ea optat corrigi quae ad se nihil pertinent. Ut autem apertius loquar, hoc dico, cum omnes Ecclesiae partes egeant correctione, populum eius tantum partis emendationem cupere quae nihil ad se attinet sed ad alios, ex quorum reformatione non exigua ad se commoda perventum esse existimat. Hic vero populum flagitatore et acerrimum quidem esse facile assentior, et in hoc minime omnium simulatorem eum existimo. Qua vero parte agnoscit ad se eam pertinere, hic quidem libenter dissimulat et se maximum cunctatorem praebet. Sic verum seipsum prodit, quod [21r] in qua parte opera eius maxime utilis Ecclesiae esse possit, in ea parte maxime est ociosus vel, ut rectius loquar, maxime deformationis adiutor; in ea vero quae ipsum nihil attingit, nullam diligentiam praetermittit, sed quo diligentior, eo certe perniciosior.

Q. Quam tandem partem Ecclesiae esse dicimus indigentem reformatione, in qua populus se diligentem praebet, cum tam ad eum hoc nihil pertineat, et propterea quo diligentior in hoc se praebet, eo Ecclesiae est damnosior?

R. Ea sane est ex qua, tanquam ex fonte, omnia Ecclesiae mala effluere ipse populus sibi persuasit: nimirum omnem culpam in suis rectoribus haerere iudicat, vel in sacerdotibus vel in principibus et iis quibus ipsi principes magistratus committunt, et haec quidem populus passim in circulis et in familiaribus sermonibus iactare consuevit. Quae cum dicit, etsi aliqua ex parte verum dicere videtur (magnam enim partem eorum malorum, quibus Ecclesia vexatur, per malos magistratus invectam esse nemo negare poterit), tamen qui altius causam horum malorum non scrutantur, fontem ipsum minime attingunt. Populus vero, tanquam nulla maiori disquisitione res indigeret, cum de iis calamitatibus quibus ubique terrarum premitur et de earum causa quaestio oritur, statim omnem culpam vel in suos magistratus vel in ipsum reipublicae statum non satis e re sua institutum confert. Itaque cum vel hanc mutaverint, vel reges et magistratus sibi non probatos e gubernaculis deturbaverint, tum causam totius mali stirpitus evulsam, et hac ratione suis utilitatibus satis consultum iudicant. Sed quantum a veritate aberrant eventus rerum saepissime declarat, cum eiusmodi conatus violenti tristissimos fere semper exitus habeant, scilicet divina iustitia, certissimis signis et gravioribus ipsorum populorum calamitatibus palam testante, hanc rationem medendi vel populi vel Ecclesiae malis sibi minime placere. Quod ita esse cum multa superiorum temporum exempla declarant, tum ea quae nostro saeculo pluribus in locis acciderunt. Etenim videmus eos populos qui certam spem conceperunt se suis et Ecclesiae malis salutare remedium adhibituros, si deficerent a suis principibus et totam reipublicae formam et statum immutarent, in longae maiores difficultates semetipsos coniecisse, et ipsam Ecclesiam multo gravioribus incommodis perturbavisse. Et sane quid esse posset absurdius quam principium reformandae Ecclesiae in ea re statuere quae praecipuum ipsius reformationis fundamentum, id est obedientiam populi erga magistratus omnium ordinum, impie vexat atque convellit? Hoc ergo est quod ad reformationem quidem Ecclesiae, minime vero ad populi curam, pertinere diximus, qua cum ille se temere ac nimis arroganter implicet, hinc fit ut quo diligentior, hoc magis sibi et Ecclesiae miser incommodet. Hac enim ratio ne unum et illud quidem omnium pulcherrimum principium suo maximo malo corrumpit ac tollit, [21v] quod sane tantam et tam

salutarem vim habet, quod si populus in eo uno statuendo laborare velit, plus commodi atque utilitatis ad veram et stabilem Ecclesiae reformationem allaturus esse videatur quam ulla principum vel etiam ipsius concilii autoritate ac cura provideri possit. Adde quod in hac praeclara opera navanda ipse sibi impedimento esse potest, praeterea nemo.

Q. Velim mihi enucleatius explanes quodnam sit hoc principium in quo asseveras populi curam ipsorum principum curam et diligentiam prius ponderari posse, modo populus in id toto pectore incumbat. Illud vero me vehementer monet ipsum in tam infructuosa et salutari procu[ra]tione a nullo vel potentissimo impediri posse.

R. Illud quidem principium et fundamentum intelligo quod quivis vel infimus est populo domi suae iacere potest ubi ipse sibi rex est et episcopus, ubi praeter suam voluntatem nihil esse potest quod eum impediat. Sic vero hoc fundamentum recte et feliciter iaciet si, quibus in rebus Ecclesiam deformatam esse quaeritur, ipsas res ne committat, summo studio caverit, et quicquid habet aliquam eius turpitudinis speciem maximopere sibi fugiendum putarit, atque hoc idem a domesticis qui suae fidei et diligentiae commissi creditique sunt faciendum curarit; et quid facere, quamque vivendi rationem sequi debeant, ipse verbo exemplisque demonstrarit. Quod si liberos habeat, in iis pie sancteque educandis praecipuum et singulare studium ponat; cum vero exit domo in forum atque in privatas quasque domos, et quocumque eum pedes ferant, hanc egregiam voluntatem secum afferat, eamque apud omnes quibuscum ei negotium est, omnia recte atque ordine agendo illustrem testatamque relinquat. Dic, quaeso, si populus ita se gerat, qui quidem de moribus Ecclesiae corruptis quaeri numquam intermittit, qui nihil reformatione charius aut antiquius se habere gloriatur, atque ob eam rem concilium abhinc multos annos se flagitare dicit; si, inquam, populus eo quo dictum est modo vitam instituat, nonne perspicue vides cuiusmodi hoc principium reformandae Ecclesiae atque in antiquum illum pulcherrimumque statum restituendum futurum sit, quam utile, quam sanctum? Quid vero est quod populum impediat quominus ab hoc capite principium reformationis ordiatur quod, ut ego sentio, non tantum esset principium, sed etiam medium et pene finis ipsius reformationis? Nunquid fortasse verendum sit ne, si populus toto animo et

studio in hanc incumbat, in odium principum et magistratuum incurrat? An potius, eo quod aliter faciat, eos iratos habere et magna saepe supplicia sustinere solet? Ob hanc enim causam omnia tribunalia iudicum sunt instituta, quorum frequentiae et multitudo facile ostendit quantum populus ab hoc privato genere reformationis abhorret. Itaque, cum satis constet, idque tot tribunalium testimonio, populum a domestica disciplina instauranda animum alienissimum habere, num putas eum reformationem Ecclesiae, quam assidue ore iactat, ex animo postulare [22r] ac non potius, cum verbis optet illud facere recuset, simulatorem impudentem esse, ac semetipsum apertissime suo testimonio condemnare? Nam quod oecumenicum concilium semper in ore habet, illud attendere debes: qui domi suae privatum concilium, per quod domestica disciplina restituitur, ferre non possit, eum ne oecumenicum quidem expetere in quo omnium ordinum Ecclesiae disciplina per omnes nationes christianas constituenda instaurandaque est. Quamobrem si divina Providentia factum est ut nullum adhuc remedium tantis malis per oecumenicum concilium, unde populus omnia commoda expectabat, adhibitum sit, nihil est profecto cur miremur – quin etiam si Deus onera et calamitates populi magis magisque in dies ingravescere permittat, quoad ille tandem, suo magno malo edoctus, omnem simulationem ex animo deponat et veram famem verbi Dei sentiat ac praeseferat, atque has omnes calamitates atque incommoda ex contemptu rerum divinarum et doctrinae sanctae sibi accidisse perspiciat – quid ore possit esse iustius, quid hac paterna Dei cura dignius, aut etiam indulgentius?

Q. An tu existimas, rebus ita perturbatis atque omni disciplina, cum domestica, tum publica, prorsus confusa, dogmatibus etiam fidei, quae morum ac disciplinae fundamenta sunt, in tam controversiam adductis, populum domi suae eam posse restituere, si quisquam quod rectum sentit esse, id sedulo agat et manus, linguam, animum ab eo quod in aliis reprehendit absteat? Equidem video si conveniret inter omnes quae sit recta disciplina, plurimum valere posse, ac maximi momenti ac ponderis fore in constituendo Ecclesiae statu, si quod quivis e populo domi suae praestare queat, in id pro sua virili parte incumbat. Verum cum de doctrina fidei et morum tanta sit opinionum varietas, vide ne rem plenam periculi proponas, si populum permittis vitae suae cursum ad eam cognitionem dirigere quam ex verbo

Dei hauserit, cum id non tam facile ad intelligendum sit, quin saepe homines etiam docti a recta eius intelligentia aberrant. Ex quo verendum esset ne, dum alii aliter verbum Dei interpretantur, maior in dies totius reipublicae christianae confusio et perturbatio sequeretur, sed fac populum multa quidem ad vitam pie sancteque instituendam utilia ex verbo Dei per seipsum posse intelligere, in quibus omnes consentiunt. Tamen in universa vita dirigenda, atque in ipso Scripturarum studio, si tamen hoc populo conformandae vitae causa concedimus, qui non videt et ducibus et magistris opus esse qui non solum finem recte proponant, sed modum quendam atque mensuram etiam in rebus bonis, etiam in ipso sancto studio praescribant, id autem ad officium sacerdotum pertinere non est dubium. Horum enim labia hanc scientiam custodiunt, et illos ipse Dominus familiae suae proposuit ut bona sua iudicio [22v] et ratione dispensent, et tritici mensuram dant ei in tempore suo. Quod quidem quo magis considero, de reformatione cogitans, hoc magis ad populi sententiam inclino, qui eam ab iis inchoandam censet unde ipsa deformatio principium habuit, nempe ab ipsis sacerdotibus, quorum improbis moribus et maxima in docendo et instituendo negligentia perfectum est ut fere omnes Ecclesiae partes corruptas depravatasque esse videamus. Quae res fecit ut mirarer, cum tibi hoc proposuisses, ut radicem horum malorum investigares quo remedia facilius invenires, te populi potius quam sacerdotum peccatis initium malorum attribuisse, atque ab eius accusatione et correctione principium duxisse. Praesertim cum apud Ezechielem prophetam quasi formam huius iudicii descriptam habemus, in quo non minus populus quam sacerdos, ob corruptos Ecclesiae mores, ad dicendam causam citantur et uterque condemnatur, tamen sacerdotum et accusatio et damnatio antecedit, quare eundem ordinem in eadem fere causa tibi servandum esse iudicabam. Etenim si magister ludi, cuius disciplinae puerum commiseris, officio desit, cur non ipsum potius negligentiae quam puerum ignorantiae condemnes? Similiter in hoc corpore Ecclesiae, de cuius emendatione disserimus, cum populus discipuli locum teneat, sacerdos magistri, uterque autem sit corruptis moribus, praepostere sane agere videmur, si priore loco populi accusationem statuamus atque ab eo rectam vivendi rationem requiramus, quam ii vitam et mores suos corrigant qui magistrorum locum obtinent, et propterea populum erudire atque oratione et exemplo vitae ad studium pietatis et omnium virtutum inflammare debent. At his iam correctis et suo munere fungentibus, nisi populus sese obedientem praebeat et ad bonam frugem, ut dicitur, se recipiat, tum iure et merito ad eum accusandum descenderis.

R. Si bene cognitum et perceptum haberemus quaenam sit reformationis vis, et quantum boni in se contineat, nulla profecto existeret contentio quis primo, quis secundo vel ultimo loco reformandus est, nec ita fugeremus inter primos reformatos, quasi in prima acie collocari, quin potius hunc locum appeteremus, idemque nobis acc[i]deret quod iis qui aliquo corporis morbo laborant usu venire videmus, ut cum sanitas promittitur, nemo secundo loco sed primo quisque tantum bonum assequi studeat. Verum ita se ratio vitae communis comparata est ut quoties corporis bona valetudo, divitiae, opes ac regna speranda proponuntur, omnes¹²⁴ primum locum affectemus, quod si virtutes et bona animi proposita sint, libenter in ultimum locum nos coniicimus, virtutem bonis caducis et fragilibus posteriorem ducentes, deque eius studio alteri facile cedentes, quod certe contra fieri oportuit ut in imperiis, opibus et caeteris omnibus bonis [23r] externis nemo primum locum appeteret, quod ambitionis et avaritiae proprium est. Ad bona animi comparanda summam quisque diligentiam conferret, cum praesertim omnis externarum rerum fructus ab iis pendeat, et in summo apud omnes honore fere sit quisquis in hoc curriculo fortiter certet. Nec vero Ecclesia unquam magis floruit quam eo tempore quo, propter multitudinem eorum qui in eam ingredi contendebant, dici vere potuit: “Regnum caelorum vim patitur”¹²⁵. Haec autem sancta et salutaris est vis quam utinam omnes in renovando et constituendo Ecclesiae statu adhiberemus, ut in hoc praeclarissimo opere primum quisque locum appeteret, quo certamine nihil nec gloriosius nec Deo gratius esse posset, sed cum alter alteri hoc cedat: sacerdos populo, populus sacerdoti. Imo cum is ne pedem quidem movere velit nisi sacerdos progrediantur, profecto luce clarius ostendit se nequaquam ex animo reformationem quaerere. Quisquis enim recusat hic esse primus, eum pro certo habeto ne secundum quidem aut tertium aut ullum denique locum quaerere. Nemo quidem inter studiosos reformationis numerari cupiat non potest de primo loco cum quolibet contendere (quae quidem sancta contentio foret, et valde pia ambitio), quippe qui cum Dei honore et publica utilitate coniungeretur.

¹²⁴ *omnes* added above the line in place of a word crossed out.

¹²⁵ *Mt.* 11, 12.

Q. Tu igitur¹²⁶ eum qui nullum unquam magistrum habuerit a quo veterem Ecclesiae disciplinam percipere potuerit merito accusandum putas, quod vitam et mores suos ad illius praescriptum non effinxerit?

R. Ego vero minime ita censeo. Verum qui nobis constare faciet, in re tam necessaria, et saluari magistrum populo defuisse, praesertim ei qui sacerdotes ipsos tam graviter et merito quidem accuset, quod animum abhorrentem ab emendandis moribus suis habeat? An qui tam probe ea noverit quae ad alterum spectant et ad eius quidem officium qui magistri locum obtinet, hic, si muneri suo desit, se per ignorantiam labi dicit et magistrorum penuriam causabitur? Scito igitur populum doctore nunquam caruisse, atque adeo magistrum optimum et sanctissimum ei semper adfuisse, iam inde ab eo tempore quo per aetatem idoneus ad percipiendam pietatis disciplinam esse coeperit, et illum quidem a populi latore nunquam discedere. Modo is dicto audiens esse velit; hoc autem divina et paterna Dei Providentia esse factum ut, siquando sacerdotes – qui sunt externi magistri – minus diligenter officio suo fungerentur (ut saepe fit), populo, tanquam filio in domo patris sui, assiduus admonitor et doctor officii erga homines et pietatis erga Deum non deesset. Cuius doctrinam et salutaria praecepta, si ipse populus libenter audiret, mihi [23v] crede satis haec forent ad pulcherrimum et maximum fundamentum reformationis Ecclesiae iaciendum; contraque, nisi ex hac populi obedientia ducatur, solidum aliquod eius fundamentum iaci posse desperamus.

Q. Quis tandem est praeceptor domesticus, idemque optimus et sanctissimus dono Dei unicuique attributus, quem si populus audiat non dubitas id pulcherrimum constituendae Ecclesiae principium sit futurum?

R. In quidem ille est quem populus docentem audisse praesefert, cum aliorum negligentiam in officio fungendo reprehendit, et a quo satis se didicisse ostendit quid vitio quidve laudi dandum sit, cum suos rectores vel vituperat vel laudat. Etenim si vel paulo minus religiosi et casti videamus, si vel crudeles vel avari, nonne vides quam audacter eos universus

¹²⁶ *igitur* replaces *quidem* crossed out.

populus una et communi sententia condemnet; contraque, siqui videantur pii, temperantes, humani et liberales, eos ab eodem populo eximiis laudibus ornari et amplissimis praemiis dignos iudicari? Quis igitur hoc tam rectum, tam sanctum iudicium, quod cum Dei voluntate maxime convenit, et eius sententiam clarissimis verbis explicat populum idiotam et litteras ignorantem docuit? Nemo certe nisi ille domesticus cuiusque praeceptor, quem divina Providentia singulis dedit, ne si externi doctores deesset, ut saepe fit, vel librorum nulla esset copia, quae multis in locis re vera nulla est, vel si denique ii omnes interirent, cognitione legis divinae communis vita deficeretur, neque ullam certam regulam haberet ad quam omnes actiones et officia dirigeret.

Q. Qualem tandem hunc domesticum cuiusque praeceptorem esse intelligis? Explica, quaeso, melius, et quo ille nomine sit ne me cela.

R. Sic tumet qualis ille sit facile intelliges, si tecum consideres quid iis accidere solent, qui grave aliquod maleficio animo moliuntur ut vel alterius uxorem violent, vel furtum faciant, vel falso testimonio innocentem opprimant; ecquid ii monentem intus spiritum non sentiunt, atque a scelere deterrentem, idque primum inculcantem, his rebus nefariis Deum graviter offendi, quod si fias voces minime exaudiant? At certe hoc audiunt se contra leges facturos, quae nocentes et facinorosos graviter punire solent. Nonne quisquam maleficio aliquod meditatur hunc monitorem sentit, a scelere quidem revocantem, ad bona vero impellentem, cuiusmodi sunt omnia quae placent Deo? Quod si ille quae Deo placent novit, et tibi luculenter explicat, non est profecto quod dubites eum spiritum Dei, qui tibi magister datus sit, appellare. “Quis enim hominum – ut inquit apostolus – novit quae sunt hominis, nisi spiritus hominis, qui est in ipso?”¹²⁷. Ita et quae Dei sunt nemo sane novit nisi spiritus Dei. Quicquid igitur sensum Dei nobis explanat, et sine lege scripta ea explicat quae [24r] litteris legis, in qua spiritus Dei loquitur, continentur, haec ab eius spiritu proficisci, qui domesticus cuique sit praeceptor nemo dubitare debet. Quod si tam bono, tamquam sapienti magistro unusquisque semper auscultaret ut ille de suo quemque officio admonere numquam

¹²⁷ *I Cor.* 2, 11.

intermittit, nae fundamentum reformationis praeclarum iaceretur; ut contra nullum iaci posse sentio, quamvis omnes principes et concilium oecumenicum in hoc laboret, nisi populus ante ad tam egregium opus aditum aperiatur, huic suo domestico doctori fidem primum adhibendo, deinde ab eo proposita et praescripta diligenter exequendo.

Q. An si tot sint huius interioris magistri monita, quot sunt divinae legis praecepta, num populo externus praeceptor opus est? Quo si careat, qui possit ille obscura, cuiusmodi non pauca in lege Dei sunt, intelligere, vel tam multa ac pene innumerabilia praecepta animo et memoria complecti, nisi externi doctoris opera et industria praesto sit?

R. Ego¹²⁸ vero externi doctoris operam populo esse necessaria minime negaverim, sed tum demum fructuosam esse dico cum populus, quas res praeceptor iste domesticus ipsum docet, iis rebus studere seque diligenter in iis exercere coeperit. Illa vero omnia ne vel multitudine memoriam opprimerent, vel obscuritate intelligentiam fugerent, in unius praecepti valde perspicui brevitate inclusa sunt, ex quo quidem fit ut, si quis hoc unum exequatur, omnia pietatis et amoris officia qua vel Deo vel hominibus debentur simul exequatur.

Q. Rem miram et pene incredibilem narras domesticum hunc doctorem omnia vitae officia uno praecepto amplexum esse, quod et facile ad intelligendum sit et discipulos ad perfectam divinae legis obedientiam perducatur.

R. Rem quidem miram narro, verissimam tamen. Hoc autem illud praeceptum est quod caelestis magister, cuius est spiritus ille, quem nos domesticum doctorem appellare consuevimus, omnibus proposuit in his paucissimis verbis inclusum: “Omnia quaecumque vultis ut faciant vobis homines, haec illis facite; hinc enim lex et prophetae”¹²⁹. Ex his igitur verbis plane intelligis in hoc praecepto legis summam et prophetarum contineri, quod perinde

¹²⁸ Followed by a letter crossed out.

¹²⁹ Mt. 7, 12.

est ac si dicat: quicquid ad pietatem erga Deum vel officium erga homines pertinere lex et prophetae docuerunt, id eo praecepto comprehensum esse. Huic ergo praecepto – quod tam breve tam apertum est, tanquam insitum in animis nostris ut nec de eius intelligentia quisquam dubitare possit, nec timore ne memoria excidat – si populus obediret, an non vides quam praeclarum fundamentum reformationis Ecclesiae statim iaceretur? Exterminarentur enim illico furta, rapinae, homicidia, adulteria, falsa [24v] testimonia et caetera omnia huius generis flagitia et scelera. Nemo enim est qui haec sibi fieri velit, unicuique autem debitus honor tribueretur Deo primum suus, deinde principibus et magistratibus et reliquis omnibus, ut quisque pro curandis hominum commodis ad Dei vicem magis minusve prope accedit; gratiam item benemerentibus debitam omnes persolverent Deo primum, qui est omnis benignitatis, deinde aliis omnibus prout quisque Deum in hoc genere imitatur. Haec enim omnes ab iis expectant quos aliquo beneficio sibi devinxere. Verum singula persequi non est necesse: ex his enim paucis quae perstrinximus satis perspicere, tanquam oculis videre potes quanta sit huius brevissimi praecepti vis ad constituendam inter homines beatam vitam, quippe quod non modo omnia tollit impedimenta quibus pax turbari et misera hominum vita reddi solet, sed copiam et affluentiam omnium bonorum secum affert iisque domus implet omnium quicumque parere non recusant. Etenim si praecepto huic sanctissimo omnes ordines obedire vellent, vel etiam solus populus, ut quicquid sibi fieri quisque velit, id alteri faceret, quid per Deum immortalem tali populo ad vitam beatam in terris inchoandam abesse possit? Nonne omnium domus omnibus bonis, quibus qui abundant beati existimantur, refertae essent? Cum igitur tam benignum, tam munificum praeceptorem populus audire recuset, an ex eius hypodidascalis, quales sunt omnes externi praeceptores, etiam si prophetae, si angeli essent, fructum aliquem capere eum posse existimas, praesertim cum videamus quo se relicto hoc divino magistro conferat quem sibi ad beatam vitam praeceptorem, quem ducem asciverit?

Q. Num censes, relicta spiritus Dei schola, ad detestabilem illum spiritum ire, seque ei in disciplinam tradere cuius consilium, dum sequuntur, primi illi homines miseriam et mortem in universi generis humani vitam intulerunt, quae pestes antea fuerant incognitae?

R. Ne populus quidem ipse satis novit quo se conferat, cum domesticum hunc suum praeceptorem derelinquit, quod cum facit, etiam hic magistro illi opus est qui miserum doceat quo vadit, quam ob causam plures ad eum magistri a Deo sunt missi: “Vadit ergo vagus – ut inquit Scriptura – in via cordis sui”¹³⁰. Vadit ad schola, quae cuiusmodi sit, ne ipse quidem scire potest nisi longo usu et experientia doctus, et interiori divini spiritus admonitione tanquam e turbulento somno excitatus. Possumus autem dicere ad illius spiritus, quem tu dixisti, scholam accedere qui revera hominem a spiritu Dei recedentem ad omnia scelera et flagitia instituit; sed tamen verius dicemus ipsum ad scholam hominis adire quam, nisi homo sibi aperuisset, numquam pestifer ille et capitalis doctor ad eum se insinuare potuisset. Verum si proprie ac verissime loqui malumus, dicendum est tum hominem ad [25r] divinae iustitiae et severitatis scholam accedere, huc enim omnes ablegantur qui benignitatis scholam, quae prior Dei schola fuit, reliquerunt. Haec vero, quo pacto se habeant intelligemus si quid homo experiatur cum salutarem illam scholam hac¹³¹ pestifera commutat animadvertamus. Hanc enim etiam experientiae scholam rite appellare possumus, quod in ea iustitiam Dei experimur, quae tametsi a misericordia numquam seiungitur, tamen, cum peccare pergimus, magis iustitiae acerbiter sentimus quam misericordiae dulcedinem. Propterea iustitiae divinae schola recte nominari potest, sed quoniam Deus huic Satanam praeposuit qui debitas poenas de nocentibus sumat, ideo Satanae etiam dicitur schola, qui quidem inter lictores Domini primum locum tenet: hominis vero quia se sponte sua in manu huius lictoris iustitiam violans tradidit, Dei vero quia sic ille instituit, ut quisque ultro benignitatem ac misericordiam negligit ac repudiat, iustitiae severitatem invitatus sentiat; ac merito quidem, non tamen pro eo ac meretur poenas pendat – neque enim benignissimus Pater hoc facit ut perdat quod sane singulorum merita poscunt – sed ut peccantes, his incommodorum fluctibus agitados, ad portum paenitentiae ac salutis confugere compellat. Quapropter haec iustitiae simul et misericordiae schola rite appellari potest. Haec vero quae nunc obscurius dici videntur facile intelliges si, cum populus scholam divini spiritus deserit, attenderis quo is vadat, quid cogitet, ad quae studia se applicet, quod quamquam ex quotidianis ipsius actionibus facile potes animadvertere. Nos tamen, ut rem statim intelligas, dicemus eum nil cogitare, nil conari, nil agere nisi ut voluntatis suae obsequatur et omnes cupiditates suas expleat, qua una in re

¹³⁰ Is. 57, 17.

¹³¹ *hac* added above the line.

summa universae beatae vitae positam existimat. Id autem est quod ipse Deus in homine emendandum sibi proponit, cum eum voluntati et libidini suae obtemperantem variis poenis et incommodis afficit, ut tandem suo magno malo discat, hanc esse ianuam quae ducit ad miseriam, quam quidem nos ingredi divina iustitia permittit, ut quando nihil assiduae admonitiones profecerunt, re ipsa experiamur quam sit acerbum et miserum voluntatem Dei negligere, ut nostrae indulgeamus.

Q. Quomodo dicis portam illam quam ingredimur, voluntati nostrae obsecundantes, portam esse miseriae?

R. Hoc facile intelligetur si consideremus quidnam homo, cum voluntatem Dei repudiat, sibi proponat quid velit, quid appetat, quid spectet, nimirum ille cogitationem omnem ad seipsum vertit et ad priorem suum statum qui, cum fuerit terrenus, utpote a terra ortum habens, hinc fit ut is nihil praeter terrena concupiscat. Quod enim e terra natum est, de terra loquitur et terrena appetit¹³². Verum, ut dixi, quo pacto haec se habeant melius intelligetur ex iis quae quotidie geri videmus ab universo genere humano, quod iam inde ab ultima origine hanc scholam frequentavit, neque ab ea etiam num se abduci [25v] patitur: quamquam ibi nihil discat nisi misere et turpiter vivere quam vivendi rationem, tamen ille quam maxime potest adversatur et fugit. Sed quoniam non ea via nec eo modo fugit quo Deus praescripsit, neque per illam ianuam ad beatam vitam ingredi contendit quam ipse Deus illi aperuit, iure ac merito fit ut, quanto maiori cura et studio miseriam fugit, tanto miserabilius in eam incurrat.

Q. Quomodo dicis hominem, cum appetat et sequatur ea quae accommodata sunt ad naturam suam, cuius auctor est Deus, suam miseriam sequi, propterea quod idem in homine sit obsequi voluntati propriae et portam ingredi quae ducit ad vitam erumnosam et miseram? At sane absurda res videtur eum miseriam sequi qui ordinem a Deo praescriptum sequatur: si

¹³² Cf. *Io.* 3, 31.

enim homo e terra effectus a Deo terrena concupiscit, quid est quod hanc eius appetitionem naturalem improbes, illumque ob hanc causam a Deo puniri in schola iustitiae asseveres?

R. Hoc quidem non accusamus in homine: quod, e terra factus, terrena appetat (“qui enim de terra est – ut inquit ille praecursor Domini – de terra est¹³³, et de terra loquitur”¹³⁴); sed cum illa appetat praeter ordinem Dei, id vero maxime ac meritissime improbamus. Qui enim effinxit hominem et eius naturae hunc appetitum ingenuit, idem ipsius modum terminavit, quippe qui omnia fecit in numero, pondere et mensura. Nec vero ille primus homo, qui primus utrumque vitae genus expertus est, et beatum et miserum, ideo eiectus est e paradiso, quod cibum terrenum appetiverit: est enim naturae hominis hic appetitus ingeneratus, sed quod edendo praescriptum ab ipso Deo ordinem non tenuit, ob id seipsum et nos omnes, qui ab eo prognati sumus, in maximas miserias coniecit. Haec vero facit voluntas hominis, ob quam Deus illum premit ut emendet. Emendatur autem cum posthabito omni alio verbo et doctrina quae Dei mandato adversatur quicquid appetimus et gerimus, id omne ad praescriptum verbi eius appetimus et gerimus. Si quidem hoc verbum, loco panis, a Deo propositum est ut eo, praestantem animi vim quae vera est vita, nutriat atque sustentet, eodemque primus homo beatum illum suae vitae statum conservasset, si ab eo numquam discessisset, si praeter illius praescriptum nihil unquam attigisset, quia vero non contentus hoc salutari verbo aliud verbum atque aliud consilium est sequutus, ideo aliam vitam omnium miseriarum plenam expertus est, ea ammissa quae copia omnium¹³⁵ bonorum corporis affluebat; ad hanc vero nullus cuique datur redditus nisi, relicto et repudiato suo et caeterorum omnium verbo qui carnis prudentiam sequuntur, uni vero verbo Dei parent, eoque tanquam ianua ad ingrediendum in vitam beatam utatur. Hoc vero est quod docetur in ea quam diximus scholam iustitiae Dei recte nominari posse.

Q. An igitur toto hoc tempore quod ad eiectum hominis e paradiso usque ad Christi adventum intercessit, hominem in schola iustitiae Dei, quae eum propter peccata perpetuo

¹³³ *ut inquit... de terra est* added in the margin.

¹³⁴ *Io. 3, 31.*

¹³⁵ *omnium* replaces *hominum* crossed out.

punit, versatum esse dicis, Christum vero primum aperuisse scholam misericordiae, in qua nunc omnes suos erudit?

[26r] **R.** Diximus quidem, et hoc etiam addidimus, cum Deus hominem in schola iustitiae graviter puniret, magna tamen misericordia illas poenas temperasse ut schola iustitiae numquam a schola misericordiae seiungeretur, verum fructus huius misericordiae tum plene apparuisse cum Christus, novus homo, novum ludum primus instituit et aperuit. Vetus vero illa veteris hominis schola fuit in quam primus homo, violato praecepto Dei, statim intrusus est, cumque universa eius beatitudo verbo hoc, tanquam muro quodam paradisi, circumscripta esset; necesse fuit cum ille ab hoc discederet, a sua pariter beatitudine discedere, et autem, consilio iustitia et misericordia, peccantem expulit paradiso. Ut quam ipse sibi miseriam accersiverat, repudiante praecepto Dei, hunc suo maximo malo experiretur, a qua si quando dabatur ei laxatio, tunc certe dabatur, atque eatenus dabatur, quod ille ad praescriptum verbi Dei, cum voluntatem suam, tum omnes actiones accommodabat ut tandem, periculo utriusque verbi facto, sui verbi, quod miseriam magis magisque in dies augebat, et divini, quod eius allevationem afferebat, ad hoc tandem se totum converteret, et hoc modo se prorsus omni miseria liberaret. Haec enim erat disciplina Dei patris, per quam hominem eiectum e paradiso erudiebat. Homo vero, quasi secum feras, arborem illam tulisset cuius fructus erat scientia boni et mali, sic universam suam posteritatem eadem pavissee visus est. Bonum vero tunc gustabat cum ad unius verbi Dei praescriptum bonis terrenis utebatur, malum vero cum in ea re caelesti verbo suum praefererebat. Verum quia haec adhuc obscurius dicuntur ad actiones hominum, et populorum revertamur quibus perspectis haec omnia erunt clariora. In primis autem apparebit quam salutaris existat verbi Dei virtus et pietas; contraque, quam pestiferum sit verbi hominis venenum, sese verbo Dei opponentis. Primum autem videmus quam praecipue in re natura hominis depravata verbo huic caelesti adversetur, ac repugnet quid quaerens, quid spectans id faciat. Sic enim facilius ad cognoscendam miseriae humanae radicem penetrare poterimus, quae quidem cognitio optima erit magistra et dux ad intelligendam beatæ vitae radicem et fundamentum. Diximus vero superius ob eam potissimum causam hominem discedere ab obedientia verbi Dei, ut voluntati suae pareat; quo autem haec voluntas spectet quid quaerat nondum explicatum est satis.

Q. Haec igitur mihi diligenter explana, cur scilicet voluntas hominis tam audacter se opponat praescripto verbi Dei, quaeve res eam cogat ab eo tam facile discedere.

R. Si omnes actiones hominis in unam summam colligamus, perspicue videbimus in nulla re magis eum adversari verbo Dei quam ubi de beata vita agitur, quam suapte natura [26v] universum genus humanum ita appetit ut nihil in tota vita magis propositum habeat, atque omnes actiones suas et conatus et consilia ad hanc unam dirigat quae quidem causa fuit cur primus homo a Deo desciverit, et in eam inciderit miseriam quae non ipsum modo oppressit, sed etiam in universam eius posteritatem propagata est. Etenim diaboli verbo fidem habens, aliud sibi persuaserat esse vitam beatam quam id quod Deus per suum verbum illi ostenderat, quem impium errorem cum tota eius posteritas sequatur. Quid mirum, si haeredes omnes eiusdem miseriae sumus? Quod ergo quaeris, quid homo animo spectans quid quaerens se opponat voluntati Dei, et a praescripto verbi eius discedat, dicimus eum esse quendam beatitudinis causa haec scelera committere, quod ita esse cum singulorum, tum maxime populi actiones ubique gentium declarant. Videmus enim eum non modo verbum Dei et sententiam de vera hominis beatitudine contemptui habere, sed quasi scholam quandam omnibus suis filiis ubique aperuisse, in qua hanc Dei sententiam damnare non dubitat, ut suam illi maxime oppositam statuatur et confirmet. Quod dum facit, nonne Deo se sapientiores esse profitetur? Quid igitur est causae cur miremur populum omnibus in locis omni vitae beatae fructu et iucunditate carentem omnibus miseriis praemi, qua nullam profecto mercedem iustiores Deus huic impium et stultissimum sapientiae poterat persolvere?

Q. Quam scholam intelligis populum aperuisse, in qua ea praecipue doceantur quae cum divina sapientia maxime pugnant? Quid vero tu ne putas illum stultitia et impietate usque eo prolapsus esse, ut si hac faciat, sciens et prudens faciat, seque melius ipso Deo, qui est ipsa beatitudo, veram beate vivendi rationem intelligere profiteatur?

R. Esset quidem haec valde monstruosa stultitia, si in uno solo aut raro inveniretur. Verum si actiones hominum et maxime ipsius populi consideres, quid hac stultitia vulgarius? Quam si dicas sine summa mentis caecitate nemini posse contingere, nec quemquam scientem et prudentem Dei scientiam oppugnare ut suam defendat, recte quidem dixeris. Est enim hoc verissimum: populum non satis videre, cum suam sententiam de beata vita divinae anteponit, quam impie agat. Verum haec ignorantia nullam probabilem excusationem habet, praesertim cum eiusmodi sit ut ipse in eam sponte cadat. Si¹³⁶ enim haec ignorantia, quae super universas hominum mentes sese diffuderat, instar tenebrarum quae a principio operiebant faciem abyssi, apud misericordiae parentem veniam reperiebat, nunc certe, cum venerit ille qui divisit tenebras a luce, si quis ad lucem vocatus tenebras sequi maluerit, sine ulla veniae [27r] spe in sempiternas tenebras iustissime coniicietur. Hoc vero propter populum christianum dico cui, sol iustitiae illucens, tenebras ignorantiae discussit, et quam gravia sint peccata nostra et quam graviter punienda, nisi resipiscamus, ostendit, ac simul viam per quam in luce ambulare possimus patefecit, qua neglecta, si per vias caecas aliarum gentium quae Christum non cognoverunt ire pe[r]rexerimus, nullus profecto ad lucem atque ad¹³⁷ beatam vitam reditus patebit, et in altera via longe graviora supplicia maioresque miseriae nos manebunt quam caeteras nationes. Nec enim falsorum Deorum cultores nec vetus populus Dei satis sciebat quanto scelere se obstringeret cum, caeca cupiditate incitatus, disciplinam et consilium eius magistri repudiaret qui, sese intimos sensus animorum insinuans, voluntatem Dei explicabat, ad recta et salutaria impellens et a contrariis absterrens. At populus christianus iam probe novit hoc nihil aliud esse quam Dei sapientiae resistere, Dei verbum contemnere et ipsum Christum Dei verbum et Dei sapientiam iterum cruci suffigere, eosque eadem et maiora supplicia mereri, qui Christum in penetralibus animi sedibus loquentem aspernantur, quam qui eum corpore patientem repudiarunt, et acerbissime cruciatum necarunt.

Q. An tu omnes qui, post acceptam et approbatam Christi religionem, contra spiritus in corde loquentis consilium et praeceptum hoc tempore faciunt, non solum aequae sed gravius

¹³⁶ Followed by *h* crossed out.

¹³⁷ *ad* added above the line.

peccare dicis quam qui olim Christum in terris versantem et luce palam docentem contempserunt, eumque ad extremum crudelissima morte mulctarunt?

R. Audi quid apostolus scribat ad eos qui Christum ore suo loquentem non audierunt, sed ipsius doctrinam ab aliis traditam acceperunt et approbarunt; audi, inquam, quod dicat: “Irritam quis faciens legem Moysi, sine ulla miseratione duobus vel tribus testibus moritur; quanto autem magis putatis deteriora mereri supplitia qui filium Dei conculcaverit, et sanguinem testamenti pollutum duxerit in quo sanctificatus est, et spiritui gratiae contumeliam fecerit?”¹³⁸. Hac eadem contumelia spiritum gratiae affecerunt qui ab initio peccatum in mundum introduxere. Haec enim est illa capitalis et impia fraus qua primi homines sese obligarunt, et omnes a se prognatos mirabiliter perdiderunt, scilicet ipsi primum in spiritum gratiae contumeliosi fuerunt cum Satanae consilium illius praecepto anteponerent, quod exemplum sequuta est universa illorum posteritas. Omnes enim quotquot aliquo modo peccant spiritui gratiae, qui est spiritus Christi, contumeliose resistunt, et ab hoc initio profecti dum peccata peccatis accumulunt, eo tandem prolabuntur, ut quantum in ipsis est, Christum interficiant.

Q. An igitur spiritum illum qui in animis singulorum loquitur, a peccato revocans, et prohibens alteri facere quod tibi non vis fieri, qui ad pietatem, ad sanctitatem hortatur, spiritum gratiae et spiritum [27v] Christi appellas, ut quisquis hunc audire recuset, ipsi Christo praecipienti parere recuset, et hunc spiritum illudit et extinguit, Christum illudat et extinguat? Num igitur hoc scelus commune facis non modo cum iudaeis, qui multis modis Christum descriptum habuerunt, et tandem secum una versantem et loquentem audierunt, sed etiam cum caeteris gentibus quae nomen Christi ne fama quidem et auditione acceperunt?

R. Commune quidem universo hominum generi hoc scelus esse non dubitamus, cum nemo omnium mortalium a labe peccati purus et integer sit. Nemo autem unquam peccet, quin hoc modo peccet, nempe spiritum aut tristitia aut contumelia afficiens, qui cum omnibus omni

¹³⁸ *Hbr.* 10, 28-29.

tempore est locutus. Nullum enim tempus notari potest quo Christus cum humano genere non sit locutus, sese in animos spiritu insinuans; quo autem tempore cum hominibus humano modo locutus est, is forma hominis assumpta notari quidem potest. Tunc vero id perfecit quod sub eius persona propheta Esaias multo ante de eo dixerat: “Ego qui loquebar, ecce adsum”¹³⁹. Aduit vero Christus, seque oculis videndum praebuit, brevi temporis spatio, qui semper in spiritu praesens et praesto fuerat non solum iudaeis, sed etiam caeteris omnibus gentibus; adfuit autem ut, dicto Patris audiens, corporis sui sanguine peccata hominum expiaret, qui eum spiritu suo loquentem audire recusaverant. Ut enim diximus, hoc crimen commune fuit omnium mortalium, ut initium repetatur ab illo qui primus et solus in nostro genere utramque vitae sortem expertus est: beate ac misere. Tamdiu vero beate vixit quamdiu divini spiritus non abiecit obedientiam a qua, ut primum discessit, ab omni bonorum copia discessit, seque et universam suam posteritatem omni genere miseriae involvit a qua prorsus, tanquam aquis diluvii, universum genus humanum absorptum fuisset nisi eius spiritus, qui postea carnem assumpsit, suo sanguine peccatum et mortem absorberet. Etiam antequam corpus indueret, mortalibus auxilium tribuisset, cuius imperio prout quisque obediebat, sic magis minusve miser erat: nemo vero a miseria prorsus extitit liber, quia nemo plene obediens fuit. Verum hunc spiritum semper fuisse magnum illum et salutarem magistrum humani generis, neque unquam prorsus hominem reliquisse, licet ab eo relictus sit, Scriptu[ra] testatur, sapientiae spiritus Dei omnia salutaria hominis consilia tanquam auctori tribuens, id quod omnium quoque saeculorum experientia satis superque confirmat.

Q. An Scriptura, etiam quae apud impias nationes ex voluntate Dei fiebant, ea omnia non hominis sed spiritus sapientiae tribuit?

R. Ita sane est. Sic vero dicit Scriptura de omni hominum genere et eorum actionibus: “Si correctae – inquit – sunt semitae hominum qui sunt in terris, et si quae Deo [28r] placent, didicerint unde hoc homines scire potent, nisi tu Deus dederis sapientiam et spiritum sanctum de altissimis? Nam per sapientiam sanati sunt omnes quicumque placuerunt tibi, Domine, a

¹³⁹ Is. 52, 6.

principio. Haec illum qui primus formatus est a Deo, pater orbis terrarum custodivit et eduxit e delicto suo. Et eduxit eundem de limo terrae, et dedit illi virtutem continendi omnia. Ab hac ut recessit iniustus in ira sua, per iram homicidii fraterni, deperiit. Propter quod, cum aqua deleret terram, sanavit iterum sapientiam per contemptibile lignum iustum gubernans¹⁴⁰. Ex his ergo vides cuius opera fuerit et cuius consilium quod hominem per viam salutis in tanta miseria dirigebat. Quod si, ut Scriptura dicit, sapientiae Dei hoc opus fuit, si spiritus Dei, Christi etiam spiritus opus fuisse negare non possumus. Ille vero, ut in spiritu veniens, in aquis diluvii genus humanum prorsus deleretur, per contemptibile lignum semen iustum servavit; sic postea, in corpore veniens, per contemptibile lignum hominem, ne diluvio peccatorum obrutus periret, liberavit. Communem vero praeceptorem hunc spiritum fuisse tum caeteris gentibus quam iudaeis, id maxime declarat, quod Christus, in carne veniens, eam doctrinae suae summam explicavit quae universo hominum generi pariter convenit.

Q. Quenam haec doctrinae summa est ex qua cognoscere possumus spiritum Christi, tam caeteris gentibus quam iudaeis, ad quaerendam viam salutis ducem extitisse?

R. Summa doctrinae Christi, quam in carne veniens explicavit, haec est: ut Deum omnes mortales patrem misericordem eundemque regem et dominum iustum agnoscant et colant, et Patris quidem nomen honorent, domini vero et regis pietatem timeant. In hoc enim doctrinae omnium – in quibus spiritus Christi est locutus – prophetarum summa consistit, quam Malach propheta, sub persona Dei, breviter exponit his verbis: “Si pater ego sum, ubi est honor meus? Si dominus, ubi est timor meus?”¹⁴¹. In hac ergo summa ecquid vides quod magis iudaeis conveniat discere quam gentibus? An vero dici potest iudaeos huius doctrinae praeceptorem Dei spiritum habuisse, gentes vero non habuisse? Minime id quidem, cum satis constet Deum ab utrosque semper exegisse ut hanc doctrinam salutarem semper observarent, atque ob eam causam primum ipsis communem magistrum dedisse, nempe spiritum suum suamque sapientiam, deinde separatim suos utrisque hypodidascalos attribuisse.

¹⁴⁰ *Sap.* 9, 18-19; 10, 1-4.

¹⁴¹ *Mal.* 1, 6.

Q. An Christus, antequam in carne veniret, summam doctrinae suae gentes etiam docuit, quemadmodum iudaeos? Utrosque enim tu nunc tanquam unius patris filios sub unius Dei paterna disciplina educatos dicere videris. Quod quidem, quo pacto in gentium educatione ostendi possit non satis video. Nam iudaeos quidem tanquam in manibus educatos et liberaliter institutos esse nemo est quo nesciat; quam disciplinam caeterae gentes divinitus acceperint ego certe [28v] videre non possum. Illud quidem video: eas, tanquam prodigum filium qui se ipsemet abdicarat et, impetrata bonorum parte, de potestate patris exierat, vagantes abiisse in via cordis sui, et in maximis erroribus per multa saecula esse versatas, et famem siliquis porcorum toleravisse.

R. Discesserant quidem gentes aliae, ut dicis, a paterna Dei disciplina, eamque prorsus reliquerant. Verum tamen prodigus hic filius, qui apud Deum minoris filii locum et nomen obtinebat, a paterna benignitate atque indulgentia numquam ita relictus est, quin eum spiritus Dei, salutaria monens, semper a tergo sequeretur, quamvis sese illi non tam manifeste ostenderet quam iudaeo. Hic enim, cum esset primogenitus domi sub disciplina domestica patris permanere visus est. Sed haec ut planius intelligas, dic mihi: nonne Moyses in extremo cantico, iudaeis proponens universae Dei doctrinae summam quam in lege multis libris explicaverat, hoc ait: “Leva oculos tuos in excelsum, et vide¹⁴² quis creavit haec omnia; nonne ipse est Pater tuus, qui possedit te, qui fecit te, et creavit te?”¹⁴³ Cum haec Moyses dicit, puto te primum doctrinae partem agnoscere quae supra diximus spiritum docere. Num vero existimas gentibus unquam defugisse praeceptores qui hoc idem monerent docerentque, qui ad caelum oculos tollere atque ex hoc pulcherrimo et admirabili rerum naturalium aspectu intelligere iuberent unum esse omnium patrem et sapientissimum, et infinita postea praeditum, qui omnia in lucem produxerit, et in hunc mirabilem ordinem quem videmus digesserit? At ex earum historiis intelligere quidem possumus multos huius generis magistros apud illos extitisse, nostri tam philosophos quam legum latores ac rerum publicarum, et patres etiam familias, qui hanc disciplinam et tenerent ipsi et aliis traderent. Cum ergo multos hypodidascalos eiusdem doctrinae sanctae fuisse semper in utroque populo videamus, unum

¹⁴² Followed by *h* crossed out.

¹⁴³ *Dt.* 32, 6.

etiam communem magistrum utrique ipsum spiritum sanctum dubitare sane non debemus, praesertim cum hoc conste[t] a quocumque hominum hunc magistrum subtraxeris, frustra omnes hypodidascalos suam doctrinam in illius aures infundere, cuius rei fidem faciunt historiae tam iudaeorum quam caeterorum omnium populorum. Hi enim omnes, cum summa perversitate spiritum sanctum a se reiecissent, in tantam demum oblivionem huius sanctae doctrinae venerunt ut non gentiles solum sed etiam iudaei, de quorum caecitate magis est mirandum, repudiato Dei cultu, ligno et lapidi dicerent: “Pater meus es tu”, nimirum lapideos et ligneos sibi deos se fingentes quibus divinos honoris tribuerent. Quo autem pacto haec impia superstitio mentes fere omnium gentium olim contaminaverit atque oppresserit nihil attinet dicere, cum ea res satis nota sit atque pervulgata. Ex iis autem quae hactenus dicta sunt opinor concludere possumus iudaeos pariter et caeteras gentes quoties doctrina aliqua sancta a suis hypodidascalis instituerentur eatenus ad eam percipiendam idoneos fuisse quatenus a sancto illo magistro intus loquente elementa prima prius didicissent, quo prorsus cessante et nihil docente, frustra Moyses et prophetae iudaeos [29r], frustra philosophi vel poetae vel hierophantae gentes semper docuissent.

Q. An igitur impiarum gentium quemadmodum iudaeorum magistros unius communis magistri discipulos atque hypodidascalis fuisse dicis, qui Deum omnium patrem ex fabrica mundi agnoscerent, eundem autem ipsum Dei Dei spiritum, ipsum Christi spiritum, qui est sapientia Patris, verum et unicum magistrum omnium semper et ubique fuisse affirmas? Explica, quaeso, hoc distinctius; nec enim satis intelligo quo pacto, de gentibus quae falsos Deos colebant, hoc vere dici possit. De iudaeorum enim magistris, quos Scriptura prophetas appellat, nihil dubito quin a spiritu Dei docti fuerint: “Nec enim – ut inquit dominus Petrus – humana voluntate aliquando allata est prophetae, sed a spiritu sancto docti locuti sunt sancti Dei homines”¹⁴⁴. Hoc autem in eorum scriptis primum caput semper fuisse videmus: quod a suis auditoribus primo loco intelligi quodque in primis testatum apud omnes relinquere voluerunt; se nihil suo ingenio ac mentis acumine partum et inventum dicere aut docere, sed quae a suo doctore et domino ipso Dei spiritus didicerant, haec tantum fideliter referre, a quo se missos

¹⁴⁴ 2 Pt. 1, 21

fuisse ad docendum populum profitebantur. In caeterarum vero gentium magistris, quid simile vides, qui etiam cum de rebus divinis scriberent, ipsum Dei spiritum nunquam auctorem aut praeceptorem agnovere, sed vel aliquem alium philosophum vel seipsos auctores et inventores fecere; divinum vero spiritum tantum abest ut ipsi in suis scriptis doctorem agnoscant, ut ne mentionem quidem eius unquam faciant. Qui si interrogati fuissent num a spiritu ea didicissent, idem opinor respondissent quod in actis apostolorum a quibusdam idolorum cultoribus recens baptizatis responsum fuisse dicitur; cum enim ab iis quereretur num in spiritu sancto essent baptizati, responderunt: “At ne si spiritus sanctus quidem sit novimus”¹⁴⁵. Quem ergo impiarum gentium philosophi ne esse quidem scire potuerunt, hunc tu illis praeceptore fuisse dicis? Aut cum illos audias suos praeceptores nominatim proferre cum se suam sapientiam a Socrate vel Platone didicisse aperte profiteantur, tu eos affirmare audebis a spiritu sancto edoctos fuisse?

R. Non equidem dico, cum philosophi docerent quae legi divinae congruunt, haec eos didicisse, sed quicquid rectum et pium vel scriptis vel voce tradiderunt, a spiritu sancto ipsos audivisse non dubito. Verum non omnes qui hunc magistrum audiunt item discunt licet optimi referre sciant quicquid audierint; itaque Christus ipse, cum de suis discipulis loquitur, haec distinguit his verbis: “Omnis – enim ait – qui audiunt a patre meo, et didicit, ad me venit”¹⁴⁶. Non enim quisquis audit continuo discit, seque in disciplinam Christo tradit, quot vero putas ipsum Christum docentem audivisse qui tamen eius doctrinam numquam didicerint; hoc sentiens apostolus Paulus, cum de hac doctrina Christi loquens dixisset: “Si tamen illum audivistis – ut ostenderet illud minime ad eam percipiendam satis esse, adiungit – et in eo edocti estis”¹⁴⁷. De omnibus vero illis philosophis qui illam sapientiam quam audiebant sibi, non Deo, praeceptori tribuerunt, hoc dicimus: illos quidem spiritum sanctum magistrum habuisse, non tamen didicisse, [29v] alioqui pro tanto beneficio gloriam et meritam gratiam Deo tribuissent, quo maius argumentum nullum esse potest ad declarandum quinam vere sint a Deo edocti et qui vere ea didicerint quae audierunt. Et hoc quidem maiorem fidem facit prophetas a Deo edoctos et missos fuisse ut alios docerent quam ipsamet prodigia ab ipsis edita, quae saepe etiam qui nec a Deo missi erant nec verbum eius unquam didicerant edidere,

¹⁴⁵ *Act.* 19, 2.

¹⁴⁶ *Io.* 6, 45.

¹⁴⁷ *Eph.* 4, 21.

ut de sapientibus Aegyptiorum scriptum legimus. Nunc vero cum philosophi hanc sapientiae sibi tribuerent gloriam, “dicentes se esse sapientes, stulti – ut inquit apostolus – facti sunt”¹⁴⁸, et in sua insipientia permanserunt, in eaque permanent[es] perierunt, nullum maiorem fructum ex doctrina spiritus capientes quam si eam numquam audivissent. Audivisse vero ipsos et spiritu quidem docente audivisse non dubito.

Q. An quod iudaei vix suis magistris credidissent, si se dicerent a spiritu Dei edoctos et docendi [cum?¹⁴⁹] a Deo missos fuisse, nisi prodigia verbis eorum fidem fecissent, hoc tu de impiarum gentium magistris, nullo interveniente prodigio, probabiliter dici posse existimas? Quod cum facis, maxime quoque iniuriam iudaeis facere videris, qui hac una re se caeteris nationibus antecedere gloriabantur, quod ipsum Deum doctorem et magistrum haberent, quam gloriatione tu iis¹⁵⁰ toll[ere] videris, imo palam tollis dum eam cum caeteris gentibus communicas.

R. Ego vero, cum haec dico, iudaeos sua gloria minime fraudo, neque iis donis quae maxime hanc nationem a Deo accepisse agnosco et fateor: “Non enim fecit taliter omni nationi”, ut scriptum est in Psalmis¹⁵¹. Verum excellentiam illam, qua iudaei caeteris gentibus praestabant, non ego in hoc constitutum fuisse arbitror, quod Deus eos, ex cunctis mortalibus quibuscumque spiritum suum loqueretur et doctrinae suae sapientiam communicaret, elegerit. Nunquid enim Deus iudaeorum Deus est tantum, ac non etiam gentium? Cum utrisque igitur non solum est locutus Deus, sed etiam eandem utrisque legem dedit: non illam quidem scriptam (haec enim propria fuit iudaeorum), sed aliam qua omnes populos inter se consociabat, antequam iudaei certis privilegiis ab aliis dividerentur.

Q. Quam nam tu legem hanc esse intelligis?

¹⁴⁸ *Rm.* 1, 22.

¹⁴⁹ Word illegible (binding).

¹⁵⁰ *iis* replaces *eis* crossed out.

¹⁵¹ *Ps.* 147, 20.

R. Eam sane quae in libro caeli et terrae scripta est, quae communis utrique populo semper fuit. Ut vero lex est communis, sic legislator, sic Dominus, sic legis etiam interpret communis, atque idem omnibus semper fuit.

Q. Scire aveo quisnam interpret et doctor iste sit, sed primum dicas velim quid in summa complectatur, quidve iubeat aut vetet ista lex quam in libro caeli et terrae scriptum esse dicis. Ha[ec] tu doce obsecro, si potes, ut quomodo populi omnes hac lege teneantur liquido videre possim.

R. Summa quidem eius legis colligitur in ea accusatione quam Paulus apostolus in epistola ad romanos scrip[ta] [30r] contra universum genus hominum instituit, testimonio ipsius legis, omnes mortales iniustos et impios esse convincens, neque ulla probabili excusatione ad tribunal Dei defendi posse demonstrans his verbis: “Cum enim Deum cognovissent, non sicut Deum glorificaverunt, neque ei gratias egerunt”¹⁵². Cum vero explicat qua in re gentes ostenderunt se debitum honorem Deo non tribuere. Hoc quidem in summa dicit eos interpretem huius legis non honoravisse: illum, inquam, qui summam illius legis atque id quod de Deo ex ea cognosci poterat explicavit. Hic vero est Deus ipse, quod apostolus eodem loco nos docet cum ait: “Quia quod notum est Dei manifestum est illis; Deus enim – inquit – illis revelavit”¹⁵³. Vides igitur apertissime huius legis, quae communis est iudaeis et caeteris gentibus, et latorem et interpretem esse ipsum Deum, quem cum neque iudaei neque alia nationes debitis honoribus affecissent, neque ei pro summis beneficiis meritas gratias egissent. Hunc omnium malorum et universae mortalium miseriae fontem et caput fuisse apostolus asseveranter affirmat. Quod si quaeras qua potissimum in re tantum interpretem debita gloria fraudarint, hoc apostolus ipse continuo explicat, cum subiungit: “Dicentes enim se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt”¹⁵⁴. Summa ergo contumeliae qua omnes gentes affecerunt Deum, qui illis patefecerat mysterium legis scriptum in libro caeli et terrae,

¹⁵² *Rm.* 1, 21.

¹⁵³ *Rm.* 1, 19.

¹⁵⁴ *Rm.* 1, 22.

haec est: quod sibi hanc sapientiam temere atque impie arrogarunt, seque eius inventores et magistros esse professi sunt, nec Deo magistro atque interpreti gratias egerunt, sed evanuerunt in cogitationibus propriis, vanissimae sapientiae suae id tribuentes quod summae benignitati ipsius Dei acceptum referre debuerant. Itaque, concludens eum locum, exprimit tam crimen quam poenam criminis his verbis: “Dicentes se esse sapientes, stulti facti sunt”. Ex his ergo vides primum interpretem legis naturae, quae in libro caeli et terrae scripta est, non hominem fuisse sed ipsum Deum, quod cum homines agnoscere noluissent, neque Deo gratias egissent, iure ac merito universos stultitia primum multatos esse, deinde in omne malorum et miseriae genus lapsos impie stultitia poenas sempiternas daturos fuisse nisi Deus, pro sua incredibili misericordia, alium librum, qui haec eadem brevis summatimque complectitur, eis legendum proposuisset, qui universis mortalibus facultatem arrogandae sapientiae ademit. Hic quidem liber est crucis, ea continens quibus absurdius nihil, nihil ab humana sapientia remotius dici aut cogitari posse videatur, ut quicquid homines ex hoc libro didicerint, id totum Deo doctori acceptum referre necessario cogantur; id quod summa ipsius Dei Providentia factum est ut omnium malorum causa ex animis hominum radicitus evelleretur. Quam in eo consistere iam diximus, quod homines id munus, quod est divini spiritus, proprium sibi arroganter assumunt, seque magistros profiteri non verentur, quod cum faciunt, suo maximo malo id experiuntur quod apud Salomonem ille dicit, qui personam sustinet hominum sapientiae laudem sibi quaerentium: “Ego dixi: «Sapiens efficiar», ipsa autem recessit a me”¹⁵⁵.

[30v] **Q.** An librum ob id scriptum dicis, et hominibus ad discendum propositum, ut in eo in primis discant nullum alium verae sapientiae doctorem esse posse praeterquam ipsum Deum, illudque esse omnis erroris et stultitiae caput et fontem, cum homines sapientiam et eius tradendae munus sibi arrogant?

R. Sic prorsus iudico de libro crucis, neque dubito eam esse causam cur is ea via et ratione scriptus sit, nam et ipse apostolus hanc eandem commemorat. Et quisquis ingenio suo fretus illum legere aggreditur, ita omnibus tenebris circumfusa atque obscura iudicio rationis

¹⁵⁵ *Ecl.* 7, 24.

humanae inveniret quod ad sapientiam attinet ut, nisi magister lumen admoneat, nihil in eo sapientiae videre possit, imo omnia stulta, ridicula et sapientiae maxime contraria cogatur existimare. Hic vero liber ille est qui est scriptus intus et foris, sed ita ut foris nihil legas nisi lamentationes et vae, ut inquit Ezechiel propheta, qui hunc librum devorare iussus est¹⁵⁶; contraque, nihil intus scriptum reperias nisi veras voluptates et gaudia, ut idem propheta demonstrat, qui cum librum, ut iussus erat, comedisset, factum illum esse dicit in ore suo sicut mel dulce¹⁵⁷. Hic nimirum est liber crucis Iesu Christi, qui nihil foris nisi gemitus, lachrymas, lamenta continere videtur, cum nihil ibi legamus praeter scelera et flagitia nostra, quibus condemnatio, mo[rs] et miseria sempiterna debentur; intus vero omnia melle dulciora continet: peccatum scilicet purissimo Christi sanguine deletum esse, iustitiam e caelo in terris revocatam, mortem extinct[am] et aeternam beatamque vitam universis mortalibus esse propositam. “Quis sapiens et intelliget haec”¹⁵⁸ et intelliget misericordias Domini? Ille, inquam, solus intellexit et explicavit qui cum sapientia non solum omnes mortales sed ipsos angelos antecederet; nihil sapientiae tamen sibi unquam tribuit quod a Deo patre se didicisse non praedicaret; nihil vel loquebatur vel agebat nisi quod ab eodem Patre edoctus erat; qui denique, ob eam rem, in primis gaudio exultavit et gratias egit Patris, quod is ea quae continentur hoc libro sapientes et prudentes celar[e] voluerit, parvulos non¹⁵⁹ celaret. Qui vero discipuli sint ad percipiendam huius doctrinam magis accommodati apostolus nos exemplo docet.

Q. Quid apostolus nos docet quales potissimum doctrina crucis discipulos requirat?

R. Hoc primum nullos ad hanc doctrinam minus idoneos esse iis qui, vel ex libro caeli et terrae vel etiam ex illis divinis libris, qui sapientiae Dei in eis descriptae interpretes fuerunt, se sapientiam consecutos esse sibi persuaserant. Paulus enim, qui hos libros omnes diligenter legerat, se magnam ex his fontibus sapientiam hausisse arbitrabatur, tantum abest ut vel tantum sap[ientiae] in eis inesse intellexerit, et ipsum crucis librum tanquam stultissimum

¹⁵⁶ Ez. 2, 9.

¹⁵⁷ Ez. 3, 3.

¹⁵⁸ Os. 14, 10.

¹⁵⁹ Followed by a word crossed out.

atque impietatis plenum to[lle]re atque discernere omni ratione contenderet. Ut vero simul cum Sauli nomine arrogantia deposuit et ex minaci humilis et summissus factus esset, tantum sapientiae in hoc lib[ro] stultitiae (sic enim Saulo videbantur, cum ipse sibi valde sapere videretur); tantum, inquam, sap[ientiae] [31r] in eo libro reperit ut prae illa, reliqua omnia quae didicerat, non lucra sapientiae, sed damna iudicaret, ac tandem nihil profiteretur quod ad sapientiam quidem salutarem attinet praeter Iesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum, in quo omnes thesauros sapientiae et scientiae Dei abditos esse agnoscebat. Ob eam vero causam putat apostolus hunc librum a Deo scriptum esse ut id perficeretur quod ipse apud Esaïam, multo ante minatus fuerat, cum ait: “Perdam sapientiam sapientium, et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo”¹⁶⁰. Quod quidem esse perfectum ipse rerum eventus comprobavit. Ut primum enim hic liber crucis apertus fuit, quam plurimi ex omnibus locis et gentibus ad eum legendum et perdiscendum confluxere, sed ita ut paucissimi sapientiae dediti inter hos discipulos numerarentur qui tum cupidissime convenire solent ubi sapientia resque dignae cognitione tractantur. Itaque apostolus, illis falsum et inane sapientiae nomen exprobrans, ait: “Ubi sapiens, ubi scribe, ubi inquisitor huius saeculi? Nonne Deus stultam fecit sapientiam huius mundi? Nam quia in Dei sapientia non cognovit mundus per sapientiam Deum, placuit Deo per stultitiam praedicationis salvos facere credentes”¹⁶¹, id est eos qui nullam sapientiam nisi quam Deo docente didicere amplectuntur. Tales enim sunt et appellantur ab apostolo credentes, talesque sunt omnes discipuli verbi crucis. Nam quod ad caeteros attinet, vide quid idem apostolus dicat: “Iudaei signa petunt, et graeci sapientiam quaerunt; nos autem praedicamus Iesum Christum crucifixum: iudaeis quidem scandalum, graecis stultitiam. Ipsi autem vocatis iudaeis atque graecis Dei virtutem ac Dei sapientiam, quia quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus, et quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus”¹⁶². Quae pluribus verbis persequitur apostolus ut ostendat unicum semper fuisse verum magistrum sapientiae Dei, qui quidem sit ipse Dei et Christi spiritus, quem Dei sapientiam appellat. Huic caelesti magistro, cum ii qui se sapientes esse dicunt debitum honorem et gratiam persolvere noluissent, ob librum caeli et terrae qui maximam continere sapientiam ipsis quoque videtur, placitum est Deo per librum stultitiae (talem enim librum crucis sapientes existimant) suam sapientiam eodem spiritu docente stultis explicare, atque eos vere sapientes reddere huius libri

¹⁶⁰ 1 Cor. 1, 19.

¹⁶¹ 1 Cor. 1, 21.

¹⁶² 1 Cor. 1, 22-25.

doctrina, in quo discendo tantum abest ut is qui vere sapiens efficitur aliquid de honore et gloria magistri detractum sibi arrogare possit; ut quisquis ad eum discendi causa accedit, primum fieri stultum oporteat ut sit postea sapiens. Sic enim praecepit idem apostolus, ex cuius doctrina intelligitur quicquid salutaris doctrinae usquam sit, quicquid verae sapientiae ex libris cuiusque modi ab hominibus discatur, unum eius et auctorem et magistrum esse ipsum Christum, qui et in lege naturae, cum universis mortalibus, et in scripta iudaeis separatim in spiritu suo sit locutus, semperque illum multos hypodidascalos habuisse, sed eos nihil esse quod quidem nominatim de seipso fatetur et de Petro et caeteris hypodidascalis illius [31v] libri¹⁶³, in quo caelestis sapientiae mysterium stultitiae in tegumento velatum continetur. Hos enim omnes rigare quidem et serere affirmat; sapientiam vero animis inserere posse negat: “Non enim qui rigat aut plantat est aliquid, sed qui incrementum dat; is autem est solus spiritus Dei”¹⁶⁴. Quod idem de libro caeli et terrae, quem non solum Moyses et prophetae sed etiam philosophi interpretati sunt, non minus vero asseverari potest: nihil enim est Moyses, nihil prophetae, nihil omnino philosophi, qui sibi gloriam sapientiae et doctrinae temere arrogarunt, quod neque Moyses neque prophetae tentarunt, ut iure Deus mentes eorum caecaverit. Verum, ut aliquando concludam, illud verum dico: cum de vero sapientiae magistro sermo est, in uno Christi spiritu mentis oculos esse dirigendis, qui semper docuit quicquid homines unquam bene de Deo deque recta vivendi ratione senserunt, omnes autem mortales, si cum eo conferantur, pro nihilo putandos. Haec quidem a me paulo prolixius disputata sunt, propterea quia nihil esse puto quod appetentes doctrinae salutaris veraque sapientiae magis delectare possit, aut eorum studium acuere, quam si de vero et unico omnis sapientiae magistro bene sit illis persuasum; rursusque nihil esse quod aequè nos deterreat ne a sapientia reddamus ac si certo sciamus quisnam illius verus doctor existat.

Q. Quomodo, quaeso, dicis in utramque partem plurimum valere – et ad spem acquirendae salutaris doctrinae et ad permanendum constanter in ea –, si veram et certam atque explicatam de vero doctore omnis sapientiae salutaris sententiam teneamus, atque eandem esse quae studiosis huius doctrinae mirificam delectationem affert?

¹⁶³ Preceded by *illius* erroneously repeated.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *1 Cor.* 3, 7.

R. An te, desiderantem viam salutis scire, quicquam magis delectare possit quam si compertum exploratumque habeas eum esse verae sapientiae doctorem, qui pro salute tua mortem ultro appetierit, tibi que et universis mortalibus ad vitam beatam et immortalem patefecerit, ad quam aditus numquam sit interclusus, modo eius salutaria praecepta audire aveas; qui tametsi domicilium in caelo habet, tamen nihil est causae cur altitudine caeli deterrearis? Qui enim ascendit, ipse est qui et descendit, atque in intimas sedes tuae mentis illabitur quotiescumque eum fidenter invocas; de quo cogitans, nihil est quod dicas: “Quis ascende[t] in caelum?”¹⁶⁵. Hoc enim verbum non longe est a te, non est terras mare positum, sed prope est in ore tuo et corde tuo. Quod si confitearis in ore tuo cominum Iesum, et in corde tuo credideris quod Deus suscitavit eum a mortuis, salvus eris: corde enim creditur ad iustitia[m], ore autem fit confessio ad salutem. Dicit enim Scriptura: “Omnis qui credit in illum non confundetur”¹⁶⁶. Non enim est distinctio iudaei et graeci, nam idem Dominus est omnium, di... [??] in¹⁶⁷ omnes qui invocant illum: “Omnis enim qui invocaverit nomen Domini salvus erit”¹⁶⁸. Is vero tanta liberalitate est ut, accedentem te ad scholam suam, et ianuam pulsantem, non modo [32r] non repellat, sed ultro ad cor tuum ipse adeat, neque unquam pulsare intermittat ut ingressus te erudiat, tibi viam sempiternae salutis ostendat. Cum vero te docendi causa ad se vocet, non est quod dicas: “Ego lignum aridum”¹⁶⁹, rudis litterarum, tardo ingenio sum: quin potero tanti doctoris scientiam audire, quo pacto intelligere?”. Ipse enim est qui vocat ea quae non sunt tanquam sint¹⁷⁰; qui desertum florere facit, et aridum vertit in stagna¹⁷¹; qui citius et promptius parvulis quam sapientibus et prudentibus suae sapientiae mysteria patefacit¹⁷². Imo vero hos omnino reiicit nisi se in numerum parvulorum stultorumque ascribi patiantur: stultos autem mundi eligit ut confundat sapientes. Quid, obsecro, est quod magis quam haec sapientiae cupidos delectare, consolari atque ad discendi studium incitare possit? Verum si haec animum tuum ita afficiunt, cave arcana et sublimia ex eo statim quaeras, quia ipse sit sublimis, sed tecum praeclare agi

¹⁶⁵ *Rm.* 10, 6.

¹⁶⁶ *1 Pt.* 2, 6.

¹⁶⁷ Preceded by a word of doubtful reading (binding).

¹⁶⁸ *Ioel* 2, 32; *Act.* 2, 21; *Rm.* 10, 13.

¹⁶⁹ *Is.* 56, 3.

¹⁷⁰ *Rm.* 4, 17.

¹⁷¹ *Is.* 35, 7.

¹⁷² *Mt.* 11, 25; *Lc.* 10, 21.

existimato, si primum audias et discas illa quae ille docuit cum tua causa se humile fecit: disce primum parentes tuos observare et colere; magistratibus parere; neminem unquam neque re neque verbo violare; omnibus semper pro tua virili parte prodesse. In summa, illud disce et in hoc primum tuam fidem et pietatem in eum et erga eius doctrinam studium ostende: ut quaecumque tibi velis fieri, haec aliis facias, et ne quid alteri facias quod tibi nolis fieri. Haec enim est summa earum quae doctrina Christi continet, quam si animo amplectaris et profiteare, et moribus ac vitae sanctitate exprimas, ne dubita quin hic caelestis magister mysteria suae sapientiae recondita tibi sit aperturus. Haec ergo sunt quae ut omnium piorum et salutarem sapientiam sitientium animos erigere ac consolari potent. Sic nihil detestabilius, nullam capitaliorem pestem esse demonstrant quam, si intelligens talem¹⁷³ universo hominum generi magistrum esse datum, eius doctrinam vel audire nolis vel auditam negligas: quod probrum et crimen in eos proprie convenit qui Christi fidem et doctrinam, verbis quidem profitentur, factis autem negant¹⁷⁴. Quid enim aliud eiusmodi homines expectare possunt (nisi huius impietatis eos paenitent) praeter terribile et horrendum Dei iudicium post hanc vitam, in hac vero poenam illam quam iudaei usque ad hoc tempus sustinent, iusto Dei iudicio irrogatam ob impium et teterrimum illud scelus quod in Christum ediderunt, cum in terris apud illos versaretur ac publice doceret? Quin etiam falsi christiani spiritum Christi acerbior cruciatu et cruce afficiunt, et longe contumeliosius quam illa impia iudaeorum natio tractaverit, cum in illum omnia crudelitatis exempla ederet, et magistrum optime meritum ignominiosa crucis morte mulctaret?

Q. An dicis nunc etiam aliquos Christum crucifigere, si homo (ut inquit ille propheta) configit Deum suum¹⁷⁵?

R. Quaerit quidem hoc propheta Malachias, et concludit etiam antequam Christus humanum corpus [32v] assumeret iudaeos eum configere caepisse. Illi vero, quasi hoc prorsus ignorarent, suscitatur in quo eum configunt, quibus propheta, in persona Dei, respondet: “In

¹⁷³ *t* of *talem* replaces *qu* (*qualem*) crossed out.

¹⁷⁴ *Tit.* 1, 16.

¹⁷⁵ See *Mal.* 3, 8.

decimis et primitiis et in penuria vos maledicti, et me configitis gens tota”¹⁷⁶. Configebant vero Deum in decimis et primitiis cum illas Deo debitas non solverent iis quibus Deus ipse hanc partem sibi lege reservatam donaverat. Itaque subiungit: “Non intulistis in horreum meum decimam, ut esset cibus in domo mea”¹⁷⁷. Ideo in sacerdotibus quos decimis fraudatos populus fame laborare coegerat se confixum quaeritur Deus. Quod idem ad caetera omnia iniustitiae genera verissime transferri potest: quisquis enim subtrahit alteri quod illi ex lege debetur, quisquis vim et manus affert dum iustitiam violat et configit ipsum Deum et Christum configit et violat, qui est ipsamet iustitia eiusque verus doctor et interpret, atque in animis habitat omnium quicumque aliquam iustitiae notionem insitam habent, et quid aequum iniquumque sit intelligunt. Ex quo concludere possumus si Deus tam graviter offendeatur iniustitia hominum, an[tequam] via sanctorum – ut inquit Paulus – esset propalata¹⁷⁸ et ipsa iustitia satis cognita, ut se ab illis configi diceret qui sacerdotibus partem decimam subtraherent et civibus suis fecer[unt] iniuriam, quanto gravius, post expulsam et expiatam omnium hominum perniciosam ignorantiam per summi sacerdotis sanguinem, et viam sanctorum in iustitia et sanctitate patefactam, de nobis conqueri poterit, si ad pristinam iniustitiam redierimus quo nunc, post acceptam notitiam veritatis, redire non possumus quin filium Dei conculcemus, et sanguine testamenti, in quo sumus sanctificati, pollutum ducamus, ac spiritui gratiae contumeliam faciamus? His enim verbis, apostolus scelus et execrabilem iniustitiam eorum qui se christianos profitentur describit, sic tandem concludens: “Quanto haec facientes deteriora merentur supplitia?”¹⁷⁹.

Q. Ut olim¹⁸⁰ fere humanum genus ignorabat se iustitia violanda tam graviter peccare quam tu demonstrasti, sic ego non dubito quin hodie maxima hominum pars in eadem versetur ignorantia. Quotus enim quisque est (de iis etiam loquor qui se christianos numerant) qui alteri iniuriam inferendo se putet Christum crucifigere, quare igitur utrumque qui tam gravia

¹⁷⁶ *Mal.* 3, 8-9.

¹⁷⁷ *Mal.* 3, 10.

¹⁷⁸ *Hbr.* 9, 8.

¹⁷⁹ *Hbr.* 10, 29.

¹⁸⁰ Followed by a misspelled word crossed out.

scelera per ignorantiam committunt uno eodemque supplitio plectantur quo illi qui eadem scientes peccant.

R. Non eandem habet excusationem quam olim habebat. Imo numquam divinae legis ignorantia peccanti iustam excusationem dedit, quod si venia est tributa per Dei misericordiam, et per Christi iustitiam tributa est, quin enim possit quemque legis eius ignorantia, quam iam inde a prima origine mundi promulgata est, excusare, cum Deus primo homini dixit: “Quocumque die comederis, morte morieris”¹⁸¹. Haec autem lex, cum in paradiso lata [33r] esset contra eos qui voluntati Dei obtemperare recusarent ut [ac?] suam libidinem explerent, haud quaquam terminis paradisi circumscripta sed per omnes terrarum oras disseminata est. Quamvis enim duo tantum in paradiso eam auribus acceperint, tamen omnes posteriores eorum ipsam in cordibus suis a spiritu Dei scriptam legere potuerunt. Cum vero contra hanc legem nemo non peccasset, iure et merito poena mortis, peccato proposita, universos oppressit: mortis, inquam, illius quae gravioris mortis pignus et nuntia foret. Haec vero est animae ipsius mors quae propter peccatum universo hominum generi debetur. Quicumque autem poenae huius expertes fuere, non illam propterea effugerunt quod illorum ignorantia digna esset venia, sed quod ille qui numquam illam legem violavit, neque ullo unquam peccato se contaminavit, poenam mortis peccato debita pro aliis lucens dignus fuit, qui pro eorum ignorantia deprecans pro sua reverentia exaudiretur, atque a Deo patre illis veniam impetraret. Quod si quis post hanc veniam sibi per Christum a Deo impetratam ad ignorantiae excusationem confugere velit, profecto non venia sed maiori potius poena dignus iudicatur, si qua tamen poena morte aeterna maior cogitari potest. Ut vero ignorantia legis divinae neminem apud Deum excusat, sic eiusdem legis maior cognitio peccantes magis accusat et gravius damnat. Id quod exemplum iudaeorum nobis satis declarat, qui ut cognitione legis divinae caeteris gentibus longe praestabant, sic contra eandem peccantes gravius a iustitia Dei puniebantur. Quam Dei severitatem nemo iustissimam atque illorum peccatis debitam negaverit, quod si iudaeos violando legem gravius peccasse constat quam caeteras gentes, propterea quod maiorem peccati intelligentiam haberent, illud etiam constet necesse est nos christianos, quibus sese Christus et voluntatem Dei longe clarius patefecit, multo gravius delinquere, si legem et praecepta Dei negligemus. Itaque ut iudaeis tot et tanta

¹⁸¹ Gn. 2, 17.

dona ac subsidia ad bene beateque vivendum divinitus concessa, quibus aliae nationes carebant, nihil profecerunt, atque adeo ingentem cumulum poenarum illis attulere, cum eadem peccata et scelera committerent, quam caeterae gentes, sic etiam nobis cognitio Christi, qua iudaeis longe anteceditur, non modo nihil ad beatam vitam proderit, si eadem quae iudaei in Christum commiserimus sed etiam longe graviori supplitio dignos reddet quam si ea notitia caruissemus.

Q. Num tum igitur nostrum peccatum, qui spiritum Christi offendimus, par facis iudaeorum sceleri, qui spiritum et corpus Christi iniuriosissime atque asperime tractarunt?

R. Imo vero nostrum hoc peccatum ego nequaquam iudaeorum maleficio par facio, qui Christum humano more in terris versantem resque saluberrimas docentem necaverunt. Verum [33v] eo multis partibus gravius esse affirmo, quo pluribus et magis illustribus ac certioribus modis Christus se nobis cognoscendum praebuit. Hoc autem inter caetera ille nos docuit: quicquid iniuriae aut beneficii conferatur iis qui suo spiritu praediti sint, sese in iis laedi et venerari. Dicturus enim est: “Quod uni istorum fecistis, mihi fecistis”¹⁸². Itaque cum ipse Paulus, adhuc verae pietatis ignarus, christianos persequeretur, voces illas ex ore ipsius Christi missas audivit: “Saule, Saule, quid me persequeris?”¹⁸³. Cum tamen eo tempore nulla vis humana corpus eius, quod immortale factum erat, violare possit. Verum nosti quid dicat ipse apostolus de omnibus qui Christi fidem amplexantur omnes unius corporis esse membra¹⁸⁴, cuius ipse Christus sit caput: ex quo fit ne nullum huius corporis membrum persequi possis quin ipsum Christum persequaris. Haec iudaeis omnino incognita fuerunt, et cum supplitio crucis Christum afficerent, nequaquam eum esse Dominum gloriae agnoverunt: “Si enim cognovissent – inquit apostolus – nunquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent”¹⁸⁵. At nos gloriae Domini membra, si tamen eius verbis fidem habemus, illos esse intelligimus quos saepe cruciamus et maxima contumelia afficimus, nec tamen nos propterea a tanto scelere continemus, quam eo erga gravius peccamus, quanto deteriora meremur supplitia quam

¹⁸² Mt. 25, 40.

¹⁸³ Act. 9, 4; 22, 7; 26, 14.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Rm. 12, 3-5.

¹⁸⁵ 1 Cor. 2, 8.

iudaei? Si enim nec quid esset Christum in spiritu crucifigere noverant, nec cum corpus illius in crucem tollerent, quis ille feret, intellexerunt, at nos, ut dictum [est], utrumque novimus aut si nescimus, cum haec iampridem divulgata et monumentis litterarum testata ac prodita sint, quo pacto horrendum Dei iudicium vitare poterimus? De quo nos apostolus supra severissimis verbis admonuit.

Q. Quid tandem dicis esse spiritum Christi crucifigere? Explica, quaeso, hoc distinctius. Quid enim sit corpus eius crucifigere et contumeliis afficere satis apparet; quo autem, horribiliorem tanti sceleris speciem oculis meum mentis obtulisti, praesertim omni excusatione ignorantiae sublata, hoc magis scire aveo quomodo ea res sese habeat, quod sane per paucis esse notum existimo, ipsum vero populum cuius inscitiae nunc mederi conamu[r] longissime ab hac cogitati abesse non dubito.

R. Et tamen sive de ea Christi passione loquimur qua sanctissimum ipsius corpus olim excruciatum fuit, sive de ea qua spiritum eius continenter affligimus. Nemo verius utriusque culpam substinet quam ipse populus, qui quidem satis aperte indicat sese per universum terrarum orbe huius tragediae auctorem et attorem semper extitisse. Quod ita esse, ut spero, palam faciemus, si tamen prius quaerelas exposuerimus quas spiritus Christi, qui est Dei patris sapientia, de omnibus populis habet et de singulis hominibus quos ab eo desciscere ipse populus docet.

[34r] **Q.** Quae sunt istae quaerimoniae spiritus Christi, quibus expositis te demonstraturum polliceris omnes omnium terrarum populos passionis Christi auctores existere?

R. Illae quidem quae in librum proverbiorum Salomonis scriptae sunt, ubi ipsa Dei sapientia testatur se nunquam destitisse saluberrimam doctrinam optimaque consilia omnium¹⁸⁶ mortalium auribus inculcare, in primisque operam dedisse ne magister unquam populo deesset qui eum recta et salutaria doceret, semper tamen consilium et doctrinam suam omni hominum generi invisam et contemptam fuisse, a nullo magis explosam quam ab ipso populo. Illud autem scire oportet: contemptum et odium sapientiae Dei passionis Christi causam extitisse, ut qui sapientiae aspernandae auctor fuit, idem necessario crucifigendi Christi auctor extiterit. Sed iam audi quid ille sapiens de sapientia Dei scribat: “Sapientia foris praedicat¹⁸⁷, in plateis dat vocem suam, in capite turbarum clamat, in foribus portarum urbis profert verba sua dicens: «Usquequo parvuli diligitis infantiam, et stulti ea quae sunt noxia cupient, et imprudentes odibunt scientiam?»”¹⁸⁸. Videsne ut sapientia omne quidem hominum genus increpet, maxime vero populum qui versatur in plateis, in capite turbarum et in foribus portarum urbis, quo populus ad iudicia convenire solebat? Quod si forte roges quin fiat ut sapientia his locis populum appellet, potiusque suae quenque domi atque adeo in sedibus intimis ipsius cordis, ubi eam a principio suam scholam aperuisse saepe iam diximus, causa in promptu est. Etenim, cum in cordibus hominum loquens non exaudiretur, eamque pro se quisque civium domo sua expelleret, in plateis et in portis urbium consedit, ut in iis locis populum vel invitum admoneat neque insipientes dereli[n]queret ei quibus impie fuerat relictā, exclusā et contumeliose tractatā. Quam enim edit vocem sapientia in plateis eam non esse primam, sed multas eius salutare admonitiones praecessisse ipsamet indicat, cum ait: “Usquequo stulti quae sibi noxia sunt cupiunt?”¹⁸⁹. His enim verbis significat se alias saepe noxias populi cupiditates increpasse, sed eius aures ab audienda veritate abhorruisse. Quam ob causam postea in locis publicis clamitarit inquit: “Convertimini ad correptionem meam”¹⁹⁰, quibus verbis promittit, si resipiscant, atque ad sanitatem redeant, reprehensionem quae ab ea fit, in portis urbis ubi iudicia exercere solebant, se in domos privatas cuiusque unde expulsa fuerat redituram. Hoc enim promittit sapientia cum dixit: “En proferam vobis spiritum meum et ostendam verba mea”¹⁹¹. Verba vero sapientiae non ostenduntur, nec eius spiritus recipitur,

¹⁸⁶ *omnium* replaces *hominum* crossed out.

¹⁸⁷ Preceded by *stat* crossed out.

¹⁸⁸ *Prv.* 1, 20-22.

¹⁸⁹ *Prv.* 1, 22.

¹⁹⁰ *Prv.* 1, 23.

¹⁹¹ *Ivi.*

nisi in interiori parte domus nostrae, quod est ipsum cor nostrum. Unde populus eum expulerat quem in locum si rursus ipsam reciperet, salutari admonitione commotus, iam singulam domus caelestem praeceptorem haberent, atque eius consilia et monita sequentes, caelestem in corporibus humanis vitam agerent. Sed cum sapientia domibus privatis excludatur, illa ut societas hominum inter ipsos coniunctioque servetur in locis publicis atque ad tribunalia docere et clamare nunquam intermittit. [34v] Nullus enim hominum coetus, sine sapientiae monitis et consilio, se tueri et continere in officio potest; etenim, si remota iustitia, qui fructus est sapientiae maximus neque ab ea ullo modo seiungi potest, omnis humana consociatio dissolvitur, quin fieri possit ut civitates et caetera hominum conventicula sine praesidio sapientiae consistent? Itaque illa haec intelligens, ubi privatis locis excluditur, ad publica confugit, in quibus populus versari solet, atque in plateis et in tribunalibus, ubi iudicia ad conservationem civitatis exercentur, consistens magna voce clamat: “Convertimini ad correptionem meam”¹⁹². Summa vero repraehensionis et quaerimoniae qua utitur sapientia haec est: quod singulorum domus circumiens, ac sua consilia salutaria suum spiritum, sua verba omnibus ultro offerens, ab omnibus sit reiecta. Sic autem dicit: “Vocavi, et renuistis”¹⁹³. Vocavi autem ad salutem, illi vero neglexerunt venire. Quid hic populus causari potest, quin impiae superbiae convictus gravissimas poenas luat? Quid habet quo suam ignorantiam propter inopiam praeceptorum excuset, si Dei sapientiam vocantem ad salutem, si viam monstrantem sequi ipse recuset? Numquid fortassis cum suam ignorantiam viderit nullam habere excusationem, imbecillitatem animorum causabuntur quae non sinit eo sapientiae monitis obtemperare, quod videlicet ob gravissimum illum casum primorum parentum vires omnium mortalium ita afflictas, debilitatas et prostratas sint ut vocati non modo sequi, sed ne surgere quidem possint, atqui si ita sentirent alicubi certe hanc causam afferre debuerant, quod minime faciunt, sed fac eos facere. Tamen hanc quoque excusationem tollit ipsa sapientia cum dicit: “Extendi manum meam, et non fuit qui aspiceret”¹⁹⁴.

¹⁹² Ivi.

¹⁹³ *Prv.* 1, 24.

¹⁹⁴ Ivi.

Q. Quidnam in istis sapientiae verbis observas quod tibi omnem infirmitatis excusationem, si vocati non sequantur, prorsus auferat?

R. Illud quidem quod ipsa Dei sapientia testificatur se manum porrigere ad erigendum eum qui vires sibi d surgendum et sequendum deesse causetur¹⁹⁵. Quo pacto ergo qui non surgit, vocatus a Deo, imbecillitatem suam excusare poterit, si oblatum divinae manus auxilium ad eum erigendum recuset, si ne oculos quidem ad illud convertere velit, quod dume facit, non sibi vires, sed voluntatem ad sequendam sapientiam deesse ostendit, nec tam divinum auxilium, quod repudiat, quam consilium, quod audit, se aspernari. Ita vero rem se habere declarant haec ipsius sapientiae verba quae statim sequuntur: “Despexistis omne consilium meum, et increpationes meas neglexistis”¹⁹⁶. Ex qua contemptione tandem sequitur rerumpublicarum et nationum interitus et miseriae, quas omnes populi hodie experiuntur et semper exeptri sunt. Dum enim sapientiam sese ultro nobis offerentem et salutem nostram tueri pollicentem repellimus, omnes undique nos calamitates et miseriae invadunt. Deus enim despicientes ad extremum despicit ac derelinquit; id quod minatur eius sapientia subiungens: “Ego quoque in interitu vestro ridebo, et subsa[n]nabo vos, cum id quod timebatis advenerit vobis; cum irruerit repentina calamitas, cum interitus quasi tem-[35r]-pestas ingruerit, cum venerit super vos tribulatio et angustia”¹⁹⁷. Hic vero aliquando tandem incipiunt populi arrigere aures ad sapientiae vocem, sed nimirum sero, quippe qui nimium diu eam privatim et publice despexerint. Haec enim verbo subiungit sapientia: “Tunc invocabunt me, et non exaudiam; mane consurgent, et non invenient me; eo quod exosam habuerint disciplinam meam et timorem Domini non susceperint, nec acquieverint consilio meo et detraxerint universae correptioni meae, comedent igitur fructus viae suae, suisque consiliis saturabuntur; aversio parvulorum interficiet eos, et prosperitas stultorum perdet eos. Qui autem me audierit, absque terrore requiescet et abundantia perfruetur, timore malorum sublato”¹⁹⁸. In his paucis verbis iustas quaerelas sapientiae Dei habes, et simul vides ob unam illam causam populos in tot et tantis miseriis esse versatos, quod eius vocem salutarem audire noluerunt. At cum sapientiae Dei voces et quaerelas audis, te spiritum Christi loquentem audire existimato, qui postea corpore humano assumpto, cum in terris versaretur, atque eadem haec repeteret

¹⁹⁵ *causetur* replaces *videtur* crossed out.

¹⁹⁶ *Prv.* 1, 25.

¹⁹⁷ *Prv.* 1, 26-27.

¹⁹⁸ *Prv.* 1, 28-33.

inculcaretque, ob eam rem omnes contumelias ipso corpore pertulit quas ante spiritu loquens se pertulisse conqueritur. Itaque ut sapientia exclusa cordibus hominum et privatorum aedibus se in plateis et locis publicis salutaria locutam esse dicit in libro Salomonis, sic ipse Christus, cum se videndum et tangendum mortalibus praeberet, neque a suis receptus esset, tamen pro sua infinita misericordia nunquam publice docere restitit, seque palam in synagoga et templo, nihil autem in occulto locutum esse testatur in evangelio Ioannis. Sed cum populus eum audire nollet, nec solum ex privatis domibus expelleret, sed etiam ex locis publicis et extra portas urbis eiecit, atque in cruce actum acerbissime necavissent, non ita multo post ipsi ferro, fame, peste consumpti sunt; Christus vero manet Deus benedictus in saecula.

Ex his ergo aliqua ex parte intelligere potes quid sit spiritum Christi configere, quod ante querebas, quid sit eum primum contemnere, deinde illudere et tandem prorsus extinguere. Nemo enim statim Christum in spiritu extinguit atque interficit, propterea quod nemo repente fit impius, quemadmodum neque illum in carne iudaei statim necaverunt, sed primum quidem contemptus, deinde illusio et maximis contumeliis affectus est, ac ne haec quidem scelera ab initio luce palam et publice in eum commiserunt, sed prius occulte atque in tenebris, ut nemo a principio palam sapientiam Dei contemnit, nemo palam irridet, sed ubi diu in latebris¹⁹⁹ animi nefarii et perditii homines id impune fecerunt, tandem eorum impietas ad contemptum apertum erumpit ut sapientiam Dei palam persequi et configere non pertimescant; quemadmodum videmus iudaeis Christum, qui est ipsa Dei sapientia, post multas contumelias primum quidem clam, postea vero palam illatas, publice supplicio crucis affecisse. Nimirum illud scire debes: nihil omnino esse, unde clarius intelligi queat quonam modo humanum genus, iam inde a primo coniurationis consilio contra Dei sapientiam inito inter mulierem [35r] et serpentem, Christum in spiritu afflixerat, quam ex historia passionis Christi in qua, tanquam in aliqua tragedia a spiritu sancto scripta, omnia sunt oculis corporis proposita quae in mente cuiusque a principio mundi usque ad hanc diem contra Dei sapientiam ab hominibus sunt facta. In utraque vero tragedia primarum partium actorem statuo, ut saepe iam dixi, esse ipsum populum et ipsos terrae filios, quorum inter se convinctio congregatioque populos conflavit et civitatibus et regnis terrae principium dedit in quibus, tanquam in theatro quodam, aliqua pars huius tragediae continenter agitur.

¹⁹⁹ *lat of latebris* added above the line in place of *ten (tenebris)* crossed out.

Q. Mira certe atque ad intelligendum non ita facilia narras: primum ut video populum auctorem facis passionis, qua corpus ipsius Christi Hierosolymis asperrime afflictum et cruciatum fuit, deinde in ea, tanquam in tragedia quadam a spiritu sancto confecta, dicis ea omnia in oculis atque ore hominum geri atque repraesentari quae spiritus ipse Christi in intimo corde omnium impiorum semper passus est, unde omnes calamitates et miserias ad universum genus humanum permanasse existimas. Amabo te explica haec enucleatius. Nam quod populum in passione Christi principem locum tenuisse dicis, id quidem cum historia evangelistarum minime convenire videtur, qui sacerdotes coniurationes in Christum principes et eius interimendi auctores fuisse testantur, a quibus etiam populum ad Christi sollicitarum memorant, apud quem ille prius in maximo honore esse videretur.

R. Narrant quidem evangelistae sacerdotes populum contra Christum concitasse; simul autem demonstrant eius doctrinam apud plebem in honore et admiratione fuisse, donec per sacerdotes timor est iniectus, si Christo favere pergerent, de patria, de libertate, de bonis omnium actum esse. Quae ut populus audivit, illico ad necandum Christum, quem adhuc maximi prophetae loco habuerat, non modo una mente et voce consensit, sed etiam longe acrius quam ipsi sacerdotes ira et dolore exarsit et tanto furore incitatus est ut magnis clamoribus a iudice contenderet ut Barraba – insigni latrone – dimisso, Christum – dominum et praeceptorem a Deo datum – poena crucis afficeret. Quod si sacerdotes auctores persuadendi fuere Christi vitam populi commodis obfuturam, eaque ratione voluntates omnium ab eo quem colere et peramanter observare solebant alienaverunt. Non tamen propterea sacerdotes coniurationis in Christum principes et auctores sunt existimandi: haec enim coniuratio pendet ab altera, quae persuasum habet utilitates et commoda publica et privata iustitiae ac pietati esse anteponenda. Quae quidem sententiam, cum sacerdotes pro certissimo dogmate haberent, ad secundam illam coniurationem contra Christum nullo negotio populum induxerunt. Itaque, si veros huius nefariae conspiracy auctores scire aves, exquire diligenter unde sacerdotes hoc dogma didicerint, si comparatio fiat honoris et commodi cum pietate, potius pietatem esse prodendam quam illa dimittenda, et tandem invenies ipsum populum huius praeclari dogmatis auctorem et magistrum existere, quo dogmate et sacerdotes

et reges ante corrumpuntur quam ipsi populum corrumpant. Quare iusto Dei iudicio fit, ut si eo tanquam flagello a suis rectoribus postea cedatur, quippe quod [36r] ipse sibi in sua schola contra doctrinam spiritus Dei confecerit, ac suis principibus et sacerdotibus ad perniciem suam in manus tradiderit. Sed quia nunc de sacerdotibus iudaeorum sermo est, illos quidem interficiendi Christum auctores fuisse non negamus, sed illud quoque asserimus omne consilium prodendi, capiendi, illudendi et virgis cedendi, ac tandem crucifigendi, Christi a populo tanquam a fonte manasse, quamvis ille Christum colere et vehementer observare videretur. Tamdiu enim populus ipsum habere charum visus est quam diu doctrinam eius nihil suis commodis obesse suspicatus est, atque ad coercendam phariseorum avaritiam, quam Christus damnabat, plurimum sibi profuturam iudicavit. Ut primum vero hanc utilitatis speciem ex animis eorum timor amittendi maiores commodi expulit, illa popularis aura inventum horribilem atque adversissimum conversa est, ut eventus ipse declaravit. Quod cum ita sit concludere possumus numquam populum magis ex animo favisse Christo quam ipsos sacerdotes. Verum milites quoque ipsi, qui Christum multis ante contumeliis vexatum necaverunt, de tanto scelere purgare sese possent, quod cum honorifice salutarint ac regem iudaeorum appellarint, et Pilatus venia dignus feret qui, quo tempore Christum supplitio crucis afficiebat, eo tempore ipsum, reclamantibus una voce iudaeis, regis quoque nomine affecerit. An vero te impune laturum speras, propter ea quod aperte cum iudaeis de Christo deque eius spiritu non dicis, nolumus hunc regnare super nos, cum tamen re ipsa eius imperium recuses, idemque tacitus tecum ipse dicas et sentias quod iudaei? Sed illud scire debes: Deum, qui intimos animorum sensus scrutatur ac pervidet, et tam pravas cogitationes quam impia facta vindicare solet, tua scelera non multa relicturum, quippe qui iudaeos, eadem peccantes, summa severitate puniverit. Iam vero si christianus est, illud scias oportet: Christum ipsum violare qui iustitiam violat. Cum igitur pecunia indutus iustitiam prodas, cum ob retinendam hominum gratiam ipsam illudendam vexandamque improbis addicas, cum denique ut bona tua conserves ipsam omnium bonorum conservatricem perdas, qua tandem in re maleficium tuum a Pilati et iudaeorum maleficio differre putas? Quorum opera Christus, id est ipsa Dei iustitia, per summam ignominiam et cruciatum vitam amisit. Nonne vides, cum haec facis, te omnium peccata qui passionis Christi vel auctores vel participes fuerunt in tuum caput congerere, et prodicionem eius, contumelias, illusiones, cruciatus necemque renovare? Quid vero horum est quod populus non assidue committat, qui nullum fere diem praeterire

sinit quin aut Iudae partes agat – dum lucri cupiditate caecatus iustitiam prodit – aut Pilati, dum eam perdit ne gratiam amicorum aut potentium amittat, vel iudaeorum, cum de Christo et de spiritu eius ipse continenter dicat: “Nolumus hunc regnare super nos”. Et tamen idem populus quas poenas iudaei post homines natos gravissimas sustinere, ad exemplum et memoriam iustitiae divinae sempiternam, eas poenas debitas iustissimasque confitetur; [36v] quod, cum ita sit, conqueritur, clamat et vix se continet quin Deum crudelem atque iniustum appellet cum, pro sceleribus quibus maiora iudaei non commiserunt, a tyrannis plectitur. Quorum malorum omnium ea una est causa, quod se ipse in constituenda vitae ratione sapientiore Deo iudicat, ut merito Deus ipsum a sua stultissima superbia, et ab iis qui eam profitentur, affligendum vexandumque curet. Quod tamen ille ad declarandam infinitam benignitatem suam fecit, nimirum ut populus, maximo suo malo edoctus quam stulte et temere fecerit, sapientiam suam divinae praeferendo, aliquando tandem resipiscat et magistro caelesti se instituendum regendumque libenti animo committat, in quo certe illud est mirabile documentum misericordiae Dei, quod tamdiu nos tanquam indulgentissimus pater expectat, ut paenitentes amplectatur et gratiam recipiat, antequam veniet magnus ille et terribilis dies stultitiae destinatus, quae cuique pro ratione operum vel poenas vel praemia constituat. Quod si dies iste supremi iudicii tantum terroris importaturus est, quemadmodum divinae litterae tradunt, ut ad signa tantum illius adventantis homines pr[a]e formidine arescant, quid tandem fiet iis qui, religionem christianam professi, Christum tamen eiusque praecepta et disciplinam aspernantur et repudiant? Quid, inquam, illis restat nisi – ut inquit apostolus – “terribilis quaedam expectatio divini iudicii”²⁰⁰? “Si autem – inquit – irritam quis faciens legem Moysi, sine ulla miseratione moritur”²⁰¹, quanto deteriora meretur supplitia qui filium Dei conculcaverit et sanguinem testamenti pollutum duxerit ac spiritui gratiae contumeliam fecerit? Hoc enim saepe et saepius repetendum est apud populum christianum peccatis se tam nefarie contaminantem, ut intelligat quanto graviora supplitia sint perpessuri, qui post acceptam caelestem cognitionem veritatis, una cum venia praeteritorum peccatorum, rursus ad mores et peccata gentium impiarum redeunt, quae Christi divinitatem ignorant: “Si enim – ut ait idem apostolus de veteri populo, qui Moysi obediens non fuit – illi non effugerunt eum, qui super terram loquebatur, multo minus nos, qui de caelis loquentes nobis avertimus”²⁰². An

²⁰⁰ *Hbr.* 10, 27.

²⁰¹ *Hbr.* 10, 28.

²⁰² *Hbr.* 12, 25.

quicquam horum est quod de nobis vere de populo ipso iampridem dici non possit? An si vero dicatur non iuste plectitur populus si verbi Dei penuria laboret, qui Christum ipsum Dei verbum et sapientiam in corde loquentem audire recusat? Atque illud pro certo habeat: si Christum intus loquentem aversetur, non modo aliorum magistrorum, utcumque doctorum, utcumque sanitate vitae praestantium disciplinam manem futuram, sed ne Christum quidem ipsum, si in montem iterum ascendat eoque universus populus confluat ad ipsum audiendum, et eam vitae regulam accipiendam quam dicis ab eo propositam omni hominum generi, quo facilius ad beatam vitam pervenire queat; scito, inquam, Christum his suis praeceptionibus nihil profecturum nisi ut gravius eos condemnet quam iudaeos vel ipsos turchas²⁰³ qui, ut paulo ante dixisti, neque totum Christum receperunt neque doctrinam eius perfecte planeque cognitam habent. Nos vero non modo Christum in baptismo recepimus, sed etiam eius membra facti sumus; nos in [37r] lege et prophetis eum loquentem audivimus; nos oculis fidei, si tamen veri christiani sumus, miracula omnia spectavimus, quaecumque apud veterem populum et novum edita sunt; nos rem illam in primis salutarem et memorabilem perfectam esse videmus quam Deus iampridem ore Oseae pollicitus fuerat, cum ait: “Ecce vocabo non plebem meam plebem meam, et non dilectam dilectam, et non misericordiam consequutam misericordiam consequutam, et erit in loco ubi dictum est: «Non plebs mea vos», ibi vocabuntur filii Dei vivi”²⁰⁴. Utinam vel haec solum verba populus christianus assidue miditaretur²⁰⁵ et cum animo suo cogitaret qualis extiterit, antequam se fidei et tutelae Christi commisisset, quam fuerit miser, quam caecus, quam Dei et hominum odio dignus, quantisque postea, quamque divinis beneficiis per Christum et amore Christi, ut primum illi adhaesit a Deo ornatus et cumulatus sit; contraque, qualibus et quantis bonis et ornamentis sit spoliatus vetus ille populus quibusque erumnis oppressus, propterea quod Christum reiecerit, eiusque nomen et doctrinam ex hominum memoria delere conatus sit. Haec quidem saepe meditata et paulo diligentius considerata, tantam vim ac pondus habent ut nihil ad Christum libenter audiendum incitare possit efficacius, nihil detertere vehementius ne Iesum loquentem aspernaremur. Etenim si Deus naturalibus ramis non pepercit, ex quibus Christus secundum carnem est natus, quanto minus nobis parcat, si per misericordiam inserti participes facti pinguedinis arboris, radicem ipsam spernamus, praesertim cum omnia dona et beneficia

²⁰³ *turchas*: sic in the text.

²⁰⁴ *Rm.* 9, 25-27. Cf. *Os.* 2, 24; 2, 1.

²⁰⁵ *miditaretur*: sic in the text.

multis partibus ampliora et illustriora nobis tributa sint quam iudaeis. Etenim si se illi merito praeferebant caeteris gentibus, cum dicerent: “Quae est gens tam inclyta quae habeat leges et caerimonias et iudicia?”²⁰⁶, quanto nos magnificentius de benignitate per Christum gloriari possumus, qui non solum leges et caerimonias longe sanctiores quam illas veteras accepimus sed, quod plus aestimandum est quam omnes leges, ipsam legum animam (ut ita dicam) ipsamque speciem a Deo communicatum habemus, et illud quidem in tot sacramentis sese nobis exhibentem, quo si quis nostra caret, sua culpa caret, idemque quo pluribus beneficiis a Deo fuerit ornatus, eo maior acerbiorque erit damnatio. Quamobrem quisquis talis est, causam lugendi maximam nullam gloriandi habet, ut in iudaeorum exemplo videmus qui spiritus gratiam reiicientes, Christum simul reiecerunt et se omnibus nationibus miserabiliores reddiderunt, et multo maior est miseria quae nobis, quod Deus avertat, impendet, nisi paenitentia ducti Christi verbo intus loquenti suum honorem reddiderimus. Haec vero sunt quae priori loco episcopus populi auribus et cordibus assidue instillare, vel potius fulminare et tonare debet, quibus in terram superba eorum colla prosternantur, si eos reformatos esse cupiat, ut intelligere eos faciat fontem deformationis corporis Christi, quod est [37v] Ecclesia, ab ipsis incipere, quod antequam intelligant et cum animi dolore agnoscant numquam sane rite reformari possunt.

Q. Quid vero, cum haec audierint, intellexerint, et bene percepta animo habuerint? Nihil enim sane abs te dictum videtur de eorum moribus deformatis, quod non modo ab illis intelligi non possit, sed etiam facile agnosci possit ut compunctionem cordis illis incutiat. Quam ipse agnosco in scriptis et actis apostolorum atque in eorum sermonibus primam partem fuisse cum populum formare verbo caepissent. Verum si idem populus nunc interrogaret, quod illi qui oratione Petri compuncti videbantur²⁰⁷: “Quid faciemus” et caetera, quid illis responderet episcopus?

²⁰⁶ *Dt.* 4, 8.

²⁰⁷ *Cf. Act.* 2, 14-37.

R. Idem in summa quod respondit Petrus illis qui ad eius sermonem compuncti corde eum rogarunt: “Quid faciemus?”²⁰⁸. Nec enim aliud remedium esse poterit eorum peccatis, qui non minus graviter peccarunt, post acceptam tantam gratiam in Christi spiritum, quam illi ante acceptam gratiam in spiritum et corpus Christi cum eum cruci suffigerent, ut in superioribus ostendimus. Respondebit episcopus hoc eodem modo: “Paenitemini et facite fructus dignos paenitentiae”²⁰⁹. Hanc vero Deus reliquit quasi tabula post naufragium, quam tamen accipere non potent nisi praecedat confessio et contritio ac satisfactio ex praescripto episcopi. Nihil vero horum, cum de moribus Ecclesiae deformatis loquuntur, desinant culpam in rectores suos transferre et se excusare, nisi desinant simul cum translatione culpae ab animo contra eos rebellandi. Si autem quaeras quid agnoscentes primum divinum institutum esse: ut potestatibus et principibus obediant, atque praepositis suis etiam discolis. Qui autem potestati resistit, Dei ordinationi resistere, agnoscentes etiam nihil tam grave ab ullo principe illos pati posse quin graviora eorum peccata mereantur qui principi principum et patri misericordiarum non solum obedire recusarunt, sed eius spiritum oppugnant, nec illam esse viam liberandi se a iugo principum, si ab illis rebellaverint et si viribus tum praestent ut repellere a gubernaculo possint. Loco enim illius vel unus vel plures succedent qui gravius eos tractent: sic enim iustitia solet eos rebelles castigare, ut saepissime fieri videmus. Quare si ab aliis principibus ipsi oppugnentur, haec poena patris indulgentis est expectantis illos ad paenitentiam. Quare hoc loco episcopus Ioannis Baptistae vel potius evangelistae partes cum illis aget, ut felicem et salutarem paenitentiae doctrinam illis tradat, et simul ad orationem suadebit, loco rebellionis contra principes, exemplo veteris populi Dei qui, cum gravi servitute multorum annorum a regibus Aegypti premeretur, non prius sunt liberati quam clamor eorum cum praecibus ad Deum ascendisset. Iste vero sunt praeces quae semper ascendunt, quae a corde contricto et humili sunt profectae, ad quem enim respiciam nisi ad humilem et contrictum et trementem verba mea. Hic vero non potest deesse materia episcopo, vel mediocriter docto, vel ad impellendum eos ad cognitionem et confessionem peccatorum, praesertim cum ante etiam radices ipsas peccatorum populi et gravitatem iam ante exposuimus, quae eiusmodi sunt ut qui ea cum fide audiat non potest non toto animo [38r] contremiscere, cum illa abscondita tenebrarum per orationem episcopi fuerint revelata. Cum ergo eos ad compunctionem cordis et praeces adduxerit, tum quidem ut prorsus reformatur, reducendi sunt ad pristinam formam

²⁰⁸ Act. 2, 37.

²⁰⁹ Act. 2, 38; 3, 19; Lc. 3, 8.

per illud verbum per quod erant firmati, cum essent renati id est ad verbum baptismi, quod eos purgat per fidem in nomine Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti. Quae purgationem habebant si, ut supra exposuimus, reiecta omni spe beatae vitae quam habebant in principibus et in filiis hominum ac in spiritu suo, omnem spem collocent in Deo patre, qui in eos abunde spiritum suum²¹⁰ effudit per lavacrum regenerationis per fidem Iesu Christi. Hic vero episcopus illos idem docebit quod ante diximus: primum debere docere seipsum, ut omnibus maioribus natu et superioribus se praebeat tanquam filium, iunioribus et inferioribus tanquam patrem, aequalibus tanquam fratrem. Hoc enim si observes episcopus, nihil est quod maiorem vim habeat ad reformandum populum suum. Imo in hoc consistit tota vis reformandi populi per verbum, quod si coniunctum sit cum exemplo, ut in illius vita videant quod auribus intellexerint, tum omnes numeros implet episcopi reformatoris, si dicere possit cum apostolo: “Sic ambulate, ut me exemplum habetis”²¹¹. Restat tum solum ut per verbo confirmentur. Hoc autem faciet agens partes prophetae in Scripturis interpretandis, in²¹² quibus spiritus Dei loquitur tam veteribus quam novis: “Omnis enim scribe doctus in regno caelorum profert de thesauro suo nova et vetera”²¹³. Hic autem mos fuit, in primitiva Ecclesia, quae per fidem Christi formabuntur per Scripturas confirmabuntur: “Quaecumque enim scripta sunt, ad nostram consolationem²¹⁴ scripta sunt”²¹⁵ et caetera, et omnis Scriptura divinitus inspirata utilis est ad docendum, ad corripiendum et caetera.

Q. Tu nunc videris loqui de scriba docto, de homine docto, at noster sermo caepit esse ab ea interrogatione: “Quid faciet episcopus non satis exercitatus in litteris, qui numquam scholas, qui doctores et interpretantes alios non audierit, quo pacto hic Scripturas vel veteres vel novas interpretari possit, quas numquam didicit?”.

²¹⁰ Followed by *abunde* erroneously repeated.

²¹¹ Cf. *Phil.* 3, 17.

²¹² Followed by *sp* crossed out.

²¹³ *Mt.* 13, 52.

²¹⁴ *consolationem* added above the line in place of *doctrinam* underlined.

²¹⁵ *Rm.* 15, 4.

R. Hoc idem interrogabat populus iudaeorum de Christo interpretante prophetas: quomodo hic litteras novit, cum non didicerit. Hoc idem de apostolorum verbis mirabantur sacerdotes, cum audirent eos tam constanter loqui quos sciebant idiotas esse. Sed in Christo nobis, qui scimus eum sapientiam Patris, et in apostolis, quos scimus spiritum sapientiae, et intellectus ab eo accepisse et spiritum qui docet sensum Scripturarum cessat haec questio, sicut cessaret in omnibus quos sciremus doctos esse a Deo, ut de sancto Antonio legimus, qui cum litteras numquam didicisset, interpretabatur tamen, quoties interrogatus esset, sensum Scripturarum. Nos vero nunc, cum de episcopis expertibus scientiae litterarum loquimur, non de quovis rudi episcopo loquimur, sed de eo qui bonam voluntatem affert ad pascendum populum, ut fungatur officio suo, qui non ita rudis ut litteras prorsus nesciat, sed ut ita doctus quae verba sonant saltem intelligat. Tantum autem cognitionis [38v] spiritualis afferat quantum ostendere illis possit in quo sperandum, in quo fidendum et quem et²¹⁶ qui tantum progressus fuerit in hac cognitione, ut sui exemplum in fide et spe et amore ostendat. Haec enim coniuncta sunt cum bona voluntate, quod si faciat, hunc, etsi non doctum in scholis, doctum tamen in regno caelorum dicere non verebimur, et doctum a spiritu sancto. Nemo quidem ponere spem et fidem in Deum patrem per Iesum Christum et hoc exemplo ostendere poterit nisi doctus a spiritu sancto, quare talem inhabilem ad interpretandas Scripturas numquam dicere audebo, praesertim cum tot sint auxilia eorum librorum qui eas sunt interpretati, quorum ope uti semper poterit, quanquam terminos suae interpretationis praescriptos esse suaderem illis limitibus, ut nihil ipse doceat populum nisi quod populus, ab eo doctus, alios etiam docere possit. Hoc autem non magna et exquisita doctrina qualis in scholis saepe cum graves quaestiones proponuntur docetur multum indigebit.

Q. Quomodo igitur interpretari Scripturas possit populo si nihil docere velit nisi quod populus ipse unusquisque domi suae familiam docere possit, nisi forte aliquas Scripturarum partes se legere velit quae pertinent ad mores, quarum doctrinae populus poterit esse capax? Sed quo pacto Genesim legere possit, quo pacto prophetas, quo pacto Psalmos, in quibus tot mysteria sunt inclusa, quae non solum doctum interpretem sed doctum etiam auditorem

²¹⁶ *et* added above the line.

requirunt, si ita doceri debeant, ut qui audiant etiam aliis eadem possit interpretari? An putas libros Geneseos vel caeteros libros vel a parum in litteris exercitato doceri posse, vel a populo rudi intelligi, a quocumque eius interpretatio fiat?

R. Imo propter populum existimo et Genesim et caeteros libros scriptos fuisse, nec in iis qui docti erant spiritu, qui docti erant a Deo, libris scriptis multum opus erat. Nec vero Moyses sibi scripsit aut sui similis prophetis, nec alii prophetae prophetis, sed qui lumen spiritus clarum habebant iis qui obscuratum habebant scripserunt, quasi memoriae libellos, quibus commemoremur de voluntate spiritus quae solent interpretari ab iis qui clarius lumen spiritus habebant, id est a sacerdotibus et prophetis ipsi populo.

Q. Quid igitur? An tu, post traditam doctrinam spiritus quae in doctrina baptismi continetur, quae qualis sit iam exposuisti, populum ad Moysi dilectionem vocabis? An primum illud Geneseos caput populo leges quod propter profunda mysteria ab hebreis ante trigesimum annum non legebatur, idque etiam veteri decreto est prohibitum ne pueri vel adolescentes attingerent? An vel episcopus non multum et diu exercitatus haec docere vel populus rudis litterarum, qui semper videtur tanquam puer sensibus eiusmodi mysteria unquam percipere possit?

R. Si populus, ut dicis, sit puer, non sensibus sed malitia, tum multo quidem magis ad lectionem veteris Testamenti et maximi primi capitis Geneseos eum vocandum censerem, maxime si praecepto-[39r]-rem habent. Nec enim sine duce illum librum sumere in manus iuberem, sed cum duce ante omnes libros hunc legendum censerem. Nec vero alium ducem quaererem quam talem episcopum qualem in superiori sermone descripsimus, qui affert secum bonam voluntatem et sit exercitatus in doctrina regenerationis et reformationis, id est in fide, spe et charitate, ut ante diximus. Quamquam si talis sit populus qui haec quae supra diximus intelligere possit, et eadem velit exercere, non illum quidem puerum dicerem, sed magis virum appellarem quam antiquissimum ex populo hebreorum, qui illa non didicerit. Nec hic adiuvat tricesimus annus aetatis ad illud caput intelligendum, si superiori doctrina

careas, sine qua etiam centum annorum puer erit. Nos vero, ut de populo nostro loquamur quam habilis sit ad intelligentiam illius capitis, sic dicimus si talem habet praeceptorem qualem modo descripsimus; nec enim magis doctum in litteris requiro (quanquam si maiores afferat non recuso). Sed de hoc episcopo cui populus christianus erudiendus traditur sic dicimus, cum ea docuerit, quae supra sub forma quadam complexi sumus, videat autem populum adhuc imbecillem ad ea intelligenda vel exequenda quae in doctrina spiritus docentur, quo imbecilliores videat, hoc magis eum vocabit ad audiendum Christum loquentem in Moyse et cum Moyse in ipso primo capite, et sic deinceps in reliquis. Si vero quaeras quomodo, quia hoc nisi exemplo aliquo et quasi formula proposita intelligi non poterit, sicut in doctrina spiritus fecimus.

Q. Cedo igitur hanc formam. Nec enim, nisi forma ante oculos posita, satis hoc quo pacto fieri possit²¹⁷ [...], nisi mysteria omnia non explicata relinquere velis.

R. Si aliqua sint mysteria quae pertinent ad confirmandum populum in ea doctrina quam ad fontem doctrinae spiritualis didicit, ea nullo modo sunt relinquenda. Sunt vero alia quae huc non spectant, ea non suadere illi episcopo quem ante formavimus attingenda, sed relinquenda doctoribus. Sed veniamus divini spiritus gratiam implorantes, quo dictante ille liber est scriptus, ad tradendam formam episcopo eius explicandi populi, quanquam hoc primum est faciendum, quod Deus Moysi iussit, cum populum ad montem Syna ad audiendam legem Deo doctore iussit ut praepararet se ad tertium diem et lavarent vestimenta sua ac se sanctificarent²¹⁸. Hoc enim primum monere populum debet episcopus cum audiendum Moysem vocat, vel potius Deum loquentem in Moyse, quanquam si iam animum lotum habet, illa doctrina spiritus e fonte aquae baptismi derivata, si²¹⁹ seipsum in fide Patris et Filii et spiritus sancti Deo consecraret, ita ut nihil magis velit quam facere voluntatem Dei, iam magis erit praeparatus ad audiendum Deum loquentem cum Moyse, quam populus vetus in monte Synai iam melius est sanctificatus. Hoc ergo primum, cum ad hanc lectionem vocabit

²¹⁷ Followed by a blank space.

²¹⁸ See *Ex.* 19, 10-14.

²¹⁹ *si* added above the line in place of *in* crossed out.

episcopus populum, eum docere et admonere debet ut se praeparet ad audiendum. Tum docendus erit populus quisnam Moyses fuerit, qualis dux, qualis magister populi fuit, quid a Moyseos [39v] doctrina expectare debeat et quid Moyses doceat et quinam sint qui maxime fructum ex eius doctrina capiunt. Sed antequam perveniatur ad interpretationem haec primum sunt docenda de persona Moyseos quae iam diximus²²⁰ [...]. Omnium librorum in genere post de hoc libro Geneseos, et cur ita inscriptus sit, post de discipulis quinam sint idonei tum ad²²¹ [...] nunc hoc dicamus hanc esse illam quam post doctrinam spiritus quae continentur in baptismo Christus ab apostolis doceri iussit, cum dixit: “Docentes omnia quaecumque praecepi vobis”²²². Omnia vero quae praecepit Christus cum dixit: “Praeceptum meum est ut diligatis invicem”²²³. Hoc vero praecepto dilectionis Dei continetur “qui autem diligit proximum, legem implevit”²²⁴. Huc ergo spectavit Moyses in tradenda lege: ut ad dilectionem Dei et proximi populum perducatur, et cum hoc non posset propter infirmitatem illius populi, tum hoc agit per legem, ut saltem Deum non offendat, ut eum timeat. Et hoc modo lex Moyseos est lex timoris illis qui non habuerunt spiritum dilectionis, ut si ad amandum Deum ut patrem perducere populum non potuit, saltem ad timendum ut dominum et iudicem perducatur. Sic autem dicit Deus per prophetam ad illum populum: “Si pater ego sum, ubi est amor meus? Si dominus ego sum, ubi est timor meus?”²²⁵. Quo vero Moyses non potuit, huc episcopus, qui novum populum novo spiritu donatum discipulum habet, perducere populum elaborabit Moyse adiutore usus, qui hunc scopum sibi propositum habuit; et nunc, quo ad populum caput Geneseos attinet et omnia quae sequuntur usque²²⁶ promulgationem legis, hoc populum primum docebit haec omnia scripta esse ut sint tanquam isagogae quaedam ad legem, quo maxime spectavit Moyses in hoc primo capite, quod est principium isagogicae doctrinae ad legem. Quomodo vero nunc dicendum et iam ad interpretationem ipsius capituli veniendum erit.

²²⁰ Followed by a blank space.

²²¹ Followed by a blank space.

²²² *Mt.* 28, 20.

²²³ *Io.* 15, 12. Cf. *Io.* 13, 34; *Rm.* 13, 8; *1 Th.* 4, 9.

²²⁴ *Rm.* 13, 8.

²²⁵ *Mal.* 1, 6.

²²⁶ Preceded by *pr* crossed out.

Q. Quid tandem dicis de hoc primo capite? An in eo tradi doctrinam quae ducit auditorem ad percipiendam legem ad quam in omnibus suis scriptis Moysem spectare?

R. Sic quidem et semper in spiritu docere. Quare non expectabis a me, ut philosophiam quandam, in hoc capite tibi explicem nec hic episcopus, quem modo instruimus, nec hic populus, qui ab eo instruendus est, ad illa percipienda est idoneus, sed si ille idoneus sit ad docendum legem, hic ad eam percipiendam et amandam, quod hoc capere maxime doceri dicimus, satis muneri suscepto fecisse videmur. Hoc vero dico ne expectes, cum opera sex dierum in hoc primo capite narrantur, ut tibi explicem num Deus, divisis temporibus, haec opera fecit, an vero uno die vel uno momento, quod Deus est facilius quam nobis cogitare. Sed hoc a me accipe, cuius populus satis capax esse poterit, cum hebrei sex dies ad opera facienda ex lege data habebant, septimum autem ad quietem ab opere, ut toti vacarent Deo, descriptione operum sex dierum populum doceri quid sex diebus²²⁷

²²⁷ Incomplete: the manuscript ends here.

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